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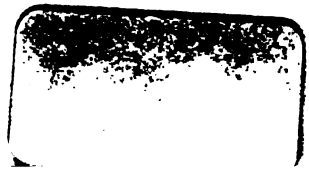

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Woodcraft

WOODCRAFT

OR

HAWKS ABOUT THE DOVECOTE

A Story of the South at the Close of the Revolution

By W. GILMORE SIMMS, Esq.

AUTHOR OF "THE PARTISAN," "MELLICHAMPE," "KATHARINE WALTON," "THE SCOUT," "THE YEMASSEE," "GUY RIVERS," ETC.

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TO

JOSEPH JOHNSON, M.D.,

CHARLESTON, S. C.

MY DEAR DR.—

I THINK it very likely that you have encountered, in your early days some of the persons of this domestic novel. They are all drawn from the life, and are sufficiently salient, I trust, to be remembered. The humorists of "Glen Eberley" were well-known personages of preceding generations, here thinly disguised under false names and fanciful localities, which, I am inclined to think will prove no disguise to you. I shall keep my secret, however, as a matter of course; but you are under no obligations to do so, and will please remember what you can and relate what you please. You have so long wandered in the interesting periods of the Revolution, and among the generations which immediately followed that event, that I am persuaded to believe that you will find pleasure even in the peru-

sal of a record so imperfect as my own. I owe so much to your kind communications, and to your own researches in this direction, that I derive great satisfaction from the hope that you will find pleasure in perusing my story, and that it may stimulate your memory into recalling many things which it may be agreeable to you to resuscitate.

With great respect and regard, I am, dear sir, faithfully, your friend,

THE AUTHOR.

WOODCRAFT.

CHAPTER I.

A BRAVE WIDOW.

THE provisional articles of peace, between the King of Great Britain, and the revolted colonies of America, were signed at Paris, on the 13th November, 1782. The British forces in Charleston, South Carolina, prepared to abandon that city early in the following December. The event took place on the 14th of that month. Prior to this period, the enemy had been confined to the immediate precincts of the garrison. The gradually contracting arms of the Americans had established a cordon about them, which they had found it impossible to break; and the rival armies, the one unable to take the field, and the other too feeble to force the garrison, lay watching each other, like a couple of grim tigers, who have learned, by frequent combats, to regard their opponents with respect, if not affection. Both were exhausted. Exhaustion, not wisdom, or a better state of feeling, was the secret of the peace which was finally concluded between the two nations, and of which, South Carolina, and Charleston in particular, was eagerly expecting the benefits. For more than two years this region was in full, or in partial keeping, of the enemy. The days had been counted by skirmishes and battles, by fears, hates, anxieties, persecution, and blood. The time for repose was at hand. Peace was agreed upon; the British army was about to evacuate the city; the Americans were crowding about their outposts, eager to come in. Meanwhile commis-

sioners from both were in the city, preparing for a peaceable restoration of prisoners, chattels, and soil. There was much to be re-delivered, which irked the stomach of the British captor, and his allies among the loyalists. The latter had many fears of meeting with their ancient brethren. Both the British and themselves had much plunder which it was becoming difficult to make away with. The American commissioners were particularly solicitous in respect to this matter. South Carolina had already lost twenty-five thousand slaves, which British philanthropy had transferred from the rice-fields of Carolina, to the sugar estates of the West India Islands; and there were yet other thousands waiting to be similarly transported. But how to conceal them from the lynx eyes of the commissioners, who were studiously attentive to the mode of fitting up the transport-ships, and their accommodations provided for passengers; and especially heedful that they were not too much crowded with the black, for the comfort of the white inhabitants. Such vigilance was the subject of much soreness on the part of those who exercised their charities for the African race, without desiring to give their labors any unnecessary publicity. The anxieties of the one party, and the vigilance of the other, were duly increased as the moment drew nigh for the exodus of the British.

It was but three days from this event, when Colonel Moncrieff, of the latter—whose philanthropy on behalf of the blacks had been exercised on a most extensive scale—was surprised by an unexpected visitor. We may add, an unwelcome one. He was sitting in his office, books and paper around him, swords upon the wall, pistols among papers upon the table, and with but one companion. This was a person of rusty complexion, sharp visage, small bulbous-shaped nose, a low, broad forehead, and sinister expression of mouth and eyes. The latter were of a light grey, keen rather than bright, and significant of cunning rather than character.

These two persons appeared to be busy in long details, figured out on several sheets of paper, and a confused array of arithmetical propositions. But there seemed no difficulty between them; the business, which equally interested both, seemed mutually satisfactory. Over some of the details they chuckled pleasantly. They were thus employed, when the door was suddenly thrown

open, and a white servant, partly in military habit, appeared at the entrance.

"Well, Waldron," said Moncrieff, scarcely looking up, "what now?"

"A lady, sir."

"A lady? Who, pray? What's her name?

"Didn't tell me, sir—is here—the lady says she must see you."

"Well, if a lady says she *must* see me, the necessity is hardly to be escaped, I suppose. Show her in."

The servant stepped back, and the lady entered—a fair and comely dame, scarcely forty, with a fresh, healthy expression, a bright, cherry blue eye, a sweet, intelligent mouth, as indicative of character as of beauty, and a frank, buoyant expression of countenance. Her figure was tall, yet somewhat inclined to *embonpoint*, though her carriage was equally dignified and graceful. The gentlemen rose promptly at her entrance. Moncrieff advanced politely and handed her a chair, which she took with a quiet ease and promptness that showed her to be accustomed to society.

Moncrieff was evidently and immediately impressed by her presence. It was quite apparent, however, that she was entirely unknown to him. Not so with his companion, whose visage put on a look of blank dissatisfaction at the moment of her entrance, which at once dispersed the smiles that had mantled it only a moment before. But neither of the other persons in the room seemed to notice *his* disquiet. He drew apart, and went toward one of the windows, but kept his eye upon the two, with an oblique glance eminently his own; and his ears were keenly alive to what was spoken.

"May I have the honor, madam, of serving you?" was the question of Moncrieff, with all the courtesy proper to an officer in his Britannic majesty's service. The answer was prompt. In a clear, frank, musical voice, the lady said—

"I bring you, sir, a billet from his excellency, General Leslie, which will fully explain my business. My name is Eveleigh, the widow of the late Major Eveleigh, who once held the office in your army that you now hold."

"I remember, madam; I had not the pleasure of knowing

Major Eveleigh personally, but his rank and character are fully known to me."

"Here, sir, is General Leslie's letter."

She took it from her bag, and handed it as she spoke. The brow of Colonel Moncrieff clouded as he read.

"You will perceive sir," said the lady, "that his excellency, General Leslie, requests you to see that certain negroes be restored to me, my property, which are now within the garrison—their names are in this paper, and a description of them individually, by which they may each be identified."

Moncrieff read the second paper with increasing gravity of aspect. His male companion crossed the floor to him, and looked over the paper as he read. The widow Eveleigh observed the movement—and the man—with some interest. After a few moments, Moncrieff, with something of annoyance in his tone, remarked—

"Why, madam, it is very doubtful if there be any such slaves within the garrison. You are aware that we have been delivering them up, as fast as they can be found, to the American commissioners. They may be concealed—"

"They *are* concealed," answered the lady.

"If that be the case, Mrs. Eveleigh," answered the other, with a soothing smile, "we must try and find them for you. We shall institute a thorough search, and should they be found, they shall be delivered to the commissioners."

"I thank you, sir; but something of this trouble may be spared you; and I should prefer—as the ownership of the property is unquestionably in me, as I have satisfied General Leslie—that they be delivered to myself."

"That, too, my dear madam, I cheerfully promise, should we find them."

"It is the trouble of this search, sir, that I would spare you. I have already found them."

"The devil you have, madam?" cried Moncrieff, starting to his feet, and evidently disquieted—"and where, pray?"

"In the old hulk, sir, at Market dock, in company with some two hundred others, upon whom I have no claim, but who, I have no doubt, will find claimants fast enough if they be once exposed on the wharf to the examination of the American commissioners."

"'Pon my soul, madam, for a whig-American, you calculate largely upon the generosity of his majesty's government."

"Very far from it, Colonel Moncrieff. I calculate nothing at all upon the generosity of his majesty's government. My calculations are all based upon what seems the necessity of the case, and the policy, which his majesty's officers seem generally to recognise, of performing the condition of the treaty in good faith. You speak of me, sir, as an American and a whig. I am not ashamed to say that I am both; but remembering that my late husband was a good loyalist, and a faithful and trusted officer in his majesty's service, I have forborne, with a due regard to his memory, from taking any active part in this contest. On this subject, however, General Leslie has been long quite satisfied. I feel proud that I may number him among my friends. You have read his letter—it appears to me that nothing more is necessary to be said."

"Well, madam, allowing all this, it appears to me that what is expected of us, is the delivery, to the rebel commissioners, of all the negroes claimed as fugitives—"

"Let me interrupt you, Colonel Moncrieff. The commissioners are employed only to represent the *absent*. I am here *present*. I can identify my negroes—I have done so—and now I demand of you their redelivery."

"But, why of me, madam?"

"For the best of reasons, sir. They are entered in the hulk-book in your name."

"The devil they are, madam!"

"I forgive your irreverence, Colonel Moncrieff, to myself; but regret that your tone should be so disrespectful to his Satanic majesty."

Moncrieff could not forbear a laugh.

"Begad, madam, you have me! By what names do you distinguish these negro subjects of yours?"

"Here is the list;—they have been identified by my overseer as well as myself."

"But, madam, I am somewhat curious—pray how did you—yet, no matter! You say, Mrs. Eveleigh, that you have, yourself, seen these negroes at the hulk?"

"I have, sir and spoken with them."

"Then there can be no doubt! But—" Here he paused, looked hurriedly over a pile of memoranda before him, bit the tip of his goose quill, and seemed, for a few moments, to meditate; then turning to his former companion, he said—

"M'Kewn, I must confer with you. Will Mrs. Eveleigh excuse me for a few moments?"

The lady bowed her head, and the two gentlemen left the apartment. The brave widow was left alone.

CHAPTER II.

THE WIDOW MAKES SOME DISCOVERIES.

"M'Kewn!" said the lady in an under tone. She appeared to muse for awhile. Then, looking up, her eyes seemed to become interested in the furniture of the apartment, which, as it was that of a military bachelor, was somewhat curious and contradictory in its character. The floor of the room was cumbered with chests, trunks and boxes. The walls were hung with pistols and sabres. Interspersed among these, were sundry articles of unmentionable clothing, to say nothing of military, parade, service and undress coats;—Moncrieff was something of a carpet-knight.—Great boots lay sprawling beneath the table. An elegant *chapeau bras* rested upon it; and, in near neighborhood, protruding from beneath a pile of papers, was a pair of pistols of extraordinary beauty and finish.

The widow possessed some rather curious tastes for a lady. She rose, took up the pistols, and examined them without any of that shuddering feeling which most ladies would exhibit at the contemplation of such implements. They might well attract the attention of a person not an amateur. The weapons of that day were of much more curious and costly workmanship than ours. There was an antique richness in the ornaments of the pistols which was calculated to gratify the eye. The stocks were quaintly inlaid with *fleurs de lis* and vines, done in filagree of variegated gold. The butts were capped with gold, in the

centre of which was an elaborately-wrought eye, with a small amethyst forming the pupil. The barrels were plain, but exquisitely polished. They were of rifle-bore—the duelling pistol in fact—a weapon more in use then than now, and in the workmanship of which much more care and ornament were expended.

The inspection of these beautiful tools of murder seemed to afford considerable interest to our widow. She finally laid them down in their places. As she did so, her eye was arrested by a paper which lay open beside the weapons. Her own name caught her glance. She uttered a slight ejaculation of surprise, and caught up the paper, which was one of those enormous sheets of dingy foolscap which were in common use at that period. Her interest increased as she examined the writing, and she felt justified in reading it. It afforded her some curious intelligence in regard to the very business in which she was engaged; containing, in fact, a long catalogue of names, evidently those of slaves—Sam, Tom, Peter, Dick, Pomp, Cudjoe, Dembo, Cush, Binah, Bess, Bathsheba, and a hundred more—and all parcelled off in sections, embraced in brackets, opposite to each of which were the names, also, of their respective owners. To some, the names of places, or estates, were appended. There she beheld her own name in connection with the slaves she claimed. There was something further. A memorandum, against each column, contained a reference to the source from which they had been obtained. She read the name of "M'Kewn" as that of the person who had put her negroes in possession of Moncrieff. There was Moncrieff's acknowledgment and signature. There were M'Kewn's memoranda with his own handwriting, as she supposed, and rightly; and other matters, all in detail, which she saw, in a moment, comprised a large body of conclusive testimony that might be very useful.

This, then, was the document which the British colonel and his companion had been studying when she came in. She laid the paper down in its place. But her lips became rigid with resolution. She hastily seized the paper and folded it.

"I am dealing," she said to herself, "with enemies. This document may become necessary yet to secure my property.

The villains! Shall I scruple when I am in such hands? Shall I suffer them to defraud my son of his rights, when it is in my power to prevent them? Away with such childish scruples. It is war between us, perhaps, and I owe them no courtesies, no forbearance."

She put the paper into her pocket.

"M'Kewn! M'Kewn!" she muttered. "Where have I heard that name before?

She heard footsteps approaching from without, and hastily resumed her seat and her composure. Her face on the instant became one of singular calm and simplicity. She was a woman evidently of equal good sense and nerve, and seemed totally unconcerned and unemployed, as the outer door was thrown open. The orderly, Waldron, again made his appearance, followed by another person. He looked about the room for his superior.

"He is not here—the colonel?" he remarked inquiringly.

"He is within," answered the widow, pointing to the chamber to which Moncrief and M'Kewn had retired. As she spoke, she observed that the person who followed Waldron, started, and seemed disposed to retire. Her eye quickened with intelligence, but she ceased to look at the new party. A single glance had sufficed. Waldron advanced, calling to his companion to follow.

"Come this way," said the orderly. The person addressed, hesitated for a moment, then, rapidly moving to the side of Waldron, put him between himself and the widow. They crossed the room together, and, without reserve, entered the inner apartment, the door of which they closed behind them. Mrs. Eveleigh followed them with a careless but intelligent glance. When they had passed from sight, she muttered—

"I see it now! Bostwick has been the creature of M'Kewn in this business, as M'Kewn is the creature of Moncrieff. The ungrateful wretch; and I have fed his family for years; his wife and child—when they were sick and starving. Oh! what a frightful, fiendish thing is poverty, when it is linked with ingratitude!"

The widow had discovered, in the new-comer, the squatter on a plantation which adjoined her own. The single glance which

she had given him, had sufficed to identify him; and she was too circumspect to allow him to perceive that she had made the discovery. She was satisfied to look no further. His slight form, sidelong gait, low, swarthy features, and long black hair, which hung down heavily upon his cheeks and shoulders, were not to be mistaken. She smiled sadly as she mused upon the ingratitude, which had been fed at her hands without thanks, and which had robbed her of her property without remorse. Let us leave her for a while, and become parties in the conference between Moncrieff and M'Kewn.

CHAPTER III.

ROGUES IN CONFERENCE.

"This is a d——d awkward business, M'Kewn!"

"What's to be done?" said the person addressed, in rather sullen accents.

"Ay, what? That's the question," answered Moncrieff; "I see no way to escape it, my good fellow. It robs us of some of our profits."

"But will you give up the negroes?"

"Eh! to be sure! What else? Show me how it may be managed, saving me scot-free with old Leslie, who, though three parts old woman, is yet a Tartar when you cross him—and I'm for any remedy. But it seems to me impossible."

"Can't *we* get off the negroes while you keep her in play?"

"Scarcely! She has identified them, and found them entered in my name. How the devil she has done this, I can't see. What could that Hessian, Dort, have been about."

"He was drunk, I reckon! He was the last man to have been trusted with them. I feared it. But, it strikes me that we might run the negroes without committing you."

"How so? Remember, my honor as a British officer—"

"May be kept safely, if we can prove that they broke out of keeping and took boat up the river."

"Indeed! Half a dozen negroes break away from a score of Hessian guards—"

"All being drunk."

"Unchain themselves—secure a boat, and make their way up the river through a fleet of three hundred vessels of all sizes! No! no! M'Kewn! That won't do! Old Leslie is too shrewd a soldier to listen to such a story. My answer would be an arrest and a court of inquiry. You must think of something better."

M'Kewn remained sulkily silent.

"You are gravelled!" said the other. "So am I! I do not see but that we shall have to make a merit of necessity, and the sooner we do so, the better. If we delay about it, we shall have a host of other claimants; and the danger will be, not only that they will prove three hundred slaves in our keeping, but that something will come out showing how they came into our keeping. You, for example, might be required to explain some queer histories. My notion is, that we must yield handsomely to the handsome widow—a devilish fine looking woman, by the way, with a head of her own!—and, by promptness in her case, avoid the danger of other visiters. We must discharge her chattels, and transfer the rest to the 'Tartar' before day, to-morrow. By the way, does this woman know you?"

"I think not. Her husband did. I have seen her repeatedly, and have been on her plantation. In fact, I am somewhat interested in an estate in her neighborhood. But this need not concern us now. It is a matter of some concern with me, as I am to remain in the country, that she should not know me in connection with this affair. I shall avoid showing myself when you return to her."

"You see no means, then, of evading the surrender?"

"None, but that already hinted."

"That is out of the question," said Moncrieff, rising. "I will take the physic without wry faces. But, as soon as she goes, do you see to the transfer to the 'Tartar.'"

"It will be well, too," added M'Kewn, "if you put them under some better keeper than that drunken Hessian."

"It shall be done. Well! How now, Waldron?"

At this moment, Waldron entered the room, followed by Bost.

wick, the squatter. At his entrance, M'Kewn looked disquieted, Waldron was immediately dismissed.

"You here?" said M'Kewn to Bostwick. "Did you see the lady?"

"The widow—Eveleigh?—Yes!"

"Did she see you?"

"Don't think! Jest as I caught the shine of her eyes, I dodged ahind the sargeant. Don't think she made me out at all. Didn't look as ef she did."

"Do you know what she comes about?" demanded Moncrieff.

"Reckon I does, colonel. She's been to the 'hulk' and seed the niggers herself."

"Remain here, both of you, till she is gone. Take care that she sees no more of either of you. If she has made you out, Master Bostwick, your best course will be to get into his majesty's transport, as soon as you can, or she will hang you when the rebels take possession here."

"She hain't seen me yit, I reckon," answered the squatter, though a dubious expression darkened his swarthy visage as he spoke. Moncrieff, meanwhile, proceeded, rather reluctantly, though hurriedly, to give his answer to the widow's requisition. M'Kewn resumed the subject with Bostwick.

"That woman has eyes to see through a stone wall. Do you think she got a glimpse of you at all?"

"I seed her first, I reckon."

"You are not sure?"

"No! nobody's sure of nothing, no-how, it seems to me, in this world," responded the squatter.

"Well! Even if she did see you here, it would only prove to the rebels that you were in bad company as well as myself. I have my excuse—my reasons, for being here—which, indeed, would silence suspicion; and you being seen with Moncrieff and myself would only provoke suspicion, not confirm it. We must be cautious, that's all."

"Well, now, look you, squire, there's no caution without money, and I'm mightily needing the article. I must have some, right away."

"Why, you had five guineas last week, Bostwick."

"I've lived a week since, and fed and drank—"

"Ay, and got drunk upon food and drink. Five guineas ought to last you a month, if you were a sober, prudent person."

"Look you, squire, I'm too bad a fellow to be sober or prudent. I ain't in love with myself, at all, when I'm sober; and, as for being what you call prudent, why, the thing's unreasonable. Ef I'd been a prudent person, would you have seen me here? Would I be doing for you all them dirty little transactions?"

"Pshaw! you're well enough as you are."

"I reckon'd you'd say so. You'll let me have the five guineas, squire?"

"I suppose so—for this time; but the business is nearly done up now, Bostwick. I do not see that we can be of much further use to one another: and all that's to be done, is to close up the old accounts. Don't you suppose that you're pretty well paid up for the past?"

"I don't know what you mean by being paid up. I ain't any better off for all I've done for you and him. You're pretty rich, I reckon. I'm as poor as a wood-rat."

"And whose fault? You've had money. Why didn't you keep it?"

"I've had precious little, anyhow; and I had to live—me and my wife and children. What I've got, always came by driblets, and went as fast as it came."

"You talk of your wife and children, Bostwick, but I'm thinking they got but a small share of your money. You've drunk it up and gambled it away, and to keep you in money, when it goes as fast as it comes, is clearly impossible."

"I must have it, that's sartain, squire," answered the other, doggedly. "I've been working mighty hard, and not at good work neither, for a mighty long time. You've got rich by my labors. You and he" (meaning Moncrieff) "got all the niggers—more than two hundred, I reckon. If I had got for them niggers—all of my bringing—what they *fecht*, or will fetch, to you—I'd ha' been as rich as any."

"Yes! perhaps! But without him and me, you could have got nothing for them. He had the ships to carry them off, and the king's stores to pay for them, and but for him you wouldn't have had the price of the hair of a negro for your pains. You

must not suppose that what you've done could have been of any use but for us. Still, you have been paid, according to agreement. You've had a good deal of money—"

"In driblets, I say."

"And stores—clothes—"

"Yes, the king's stores; and ef I was to blow *him* to General Leslie, for it, where would he be? And if I was to blow you to the rebels, where would you be?"

"Pshaw! you might blow to all eternity, Bostwick, and would only hang yourself the faster. You sold me negroes, and gave me your titles for them. I have your hand and seal on it, my good fellow—all fair business transactions. Don't be a fool, Bostwick, as well as a knave. Keep your senses as long as you can. You shall have the five guineas as soon as Moncrieff comes back; but the question then will be, how much more you are to have? I suppose we can present you with a good chance of stores which you can sell to the rebels at your own price. They are monstrously in need of clothes."

"I hain't made much by what I've sold yit, and I'm jest as poor a man as ever. That ain't reasonable. Arter all I've done to make a little money, losing my character, and my own right feeling, I ought to have something to show for it."

"Well, as the British are going, there will be pretty leavings, and Moncrieff won't stand upon trifles, in helping a fellow that has been faithful to him. If he leaves you stores, which will bring a hundred guineas, you ought to be satisfied. Don't you think so?"

"Ef I kin do no better," was the somewhat sulky answer.

"Well, I suppose that something of the kind will be done, and that will settle off for the past. I may give you good business hereafter. Moncrieff's coming now, and we'll fix your affairs for you at once."

The approaching footsteps of Moncrieff arrested the conference between the two. He soon after appeared, looking excessively disquieted. Let us leave the three for a few moments, while we return to the Widow Eveleigh.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WIDOW BECOMES TROUBLESOME.

We left the brave widow in an apparent calm of mind, which she did not altogether feel. She was a person of that temperament which does not affect repose—to which it is rather restraint than rest—and which, having grateful performances before it, regards delay with disgust, and feels the necessity to wait as an evil rather than a virtue. But the good had schooled her moods with considerable success, and, if she felt the feverish impatience which prompts one to be up and doing, she was yet able to subdue its exhibitions when these might come in conflict with duties equally requiring forbearance. She amused herself, as we have seen, in examining the more curious portions of the furniture of the apartment in which she was required to wait. We have noticed her examination of the beautiful duelling pistols of Moncrieff, and the discovery to which this examination led. Her eyes were soon caught by the swords and sabres hung upon the wall. Among these was a Turkish scimitar, with handle of mother-of-pearl, at the sight of which she slightly started. In a moment she had arisen and taken the weapon from the wall. She drew it fairly from the scabbard, and surveyed the polished and beautiful blade, unstained and unspotted, with a degree of interest which seemed to arise from other causes than its simple beauty. She waved the bright steel upward, with a somewhat gladiatorial air, then held it before her eyes, and it was while she was thus employed, and in this attitude, that Moncrieff suddenly re-entered the apartment. He absolutely recoiled at the spectacle, with an expression of wonder on his countenance, which he did not seek to conceal.

"By Mars, madam, you terrify me! Positively, I must arm myself, and get me a shield. I shall believe in the Amazons after this."

The lady smiled sadly, and restored the weapon slowly and

carefully to its sheath. A tear was in her eye, but it escaped that of Moncrieff. She said in low tones, as if apologetically—

"I know this scimitar, Colonel Moncrieff: I have seen it often, with its former owner, at my dwelling. It was Major André's."

"You are right, madam; and I do not wonder at your curiosity. Poor André! What a cruel fate!—and he, with such tastes, such sensibilities, and such ambition!"

"Too much lacking pride, however."

"How, madam, pride?"

"Yes; or he had never suffered himself to be put to such base uses."

"I do not see, Mrs. Eveleigh, that fidelity to one's king, can properly be so stigmatized."

"There is a higher fidelity to one's self, one's honor and individual character. But he paid the terrible penalty, and we must not dwell upon his weaknesses. He had tastes, and sensibilities, as you say;—he loved music and poetry, and could make the song and find for it the fitting harmonies. He has frequently joined me on the harpsichord, and would forget, at our evening fireside, all the habits of the soldier. He was not fitted for such a life, and he felt it. I have listened to his own self-reproaches, for having chosen the profession. He did so in an hour of disappointment—of weakness—and was only not courageous enough to abandon it when he felt his unsuitableness for it."

"But, André was a brave man, Mrs, Eveleigh."

"Yes; in one sense of the word. He had conventional courage, but not intrepidity. He would have shown himself fearless in the sight of armies—he would have fought his man without flinching in the sight of friends; but he had none of that gladiator spirit—that Hunnish blindness—which belongs to the soldier from choice. Had he possessed this quality, he would have disdained the petty employments which finally cost him his life."

"Well, madam, you have given me something to think upon, though I knew André well. We exchanged swords in proof of friendship—though, by the way, mine was the most costly weapon of the two. It was a genuine Damascus, while this, though a very beautiful imitation, is not!"

The widow looked at the speaker with an unalloyed expression of disgust. Her glance did not escape him, and his face was slightly flushed, as he added—

"Though, of course, the difference of value between the weapons was not a subject of consideration. Indeed, if I remember rightly, the first proposal to exchange came from me. It was just when he was about to embark for New York, with Sir Henry."

He paused, and the lady was also silent. She appeared willing to drop the subject. Moncrieff then promptly recurred to the business upon which she came.

"I have made you out the order, Mrs. Eveleigh, for your negroes, if they are, as you say, in the custody of Captain Dort."

"Captain Dort, sir! I know nothing of him, and have named no such person. The negroes are in the 'hulk' at Market Dock, and their keeper I have not seen."

"He is Captain Dort, madam, a Hessian, and the keeper of the 'hulk.' Had he not been drunk, madam, you would possibly have seen him—and possibly not your negroes."

This was spoken with unsuppressed chagrin. He added:—

"Here is the order, madam."

"I thank you, Colonel Moncrieff. And now that my *own* affair is settled, suffer me to draw your attention to that of one of my neighbors, and an old acquaintance. I discovered in the 'hulk,' while looking for my own slaves, seven others, who belong to Captain Porgy, a planter on the Ashepoo. They knew me, and I them, in an instant. They implored me to obtain their restoration to their owner, and I shall be obliged to you for an order to this effect also."

"By the powers, madam, but this is quite too much! One would think that you might be content with having secured your own property."

"Not so, Major Moncrieff! We are taught to love our neighbor as ourself, and such love can be shown in no better way, perhaps, than in giving heed to his interest at the moment when we attend to our own. Indeed, sir, I do not know but that, as a good Christian, I should have thought *first* of his concerns."

"Oh! you are scrupulous, ma'am! But, in truth, this Porgy, is a fierce and pestilent fellow—one of the gang of Marion—who

has made himself particularly conspicuous as a malignant. He has certainly no reason to expect favor at our hands."

"Oh! surely not favor! The question is one of right, simply. Either these negroes are Captain Porgy's or not. I can *prove* them to be so."

"But not that he has not sold them?"

"His bill of sale would show that."

"Madam, you should have been a lawyer."

"But a little while ago, your opinion was that I should have been a soldier."

"Egad! madam, it is difficult to say what profession you might not have chosen successfully."

"Thank you sir for the compliment, however equivocal. But you will give me the order, will you not?"

"Oh! to be sure, if there really be such negroes in our possession."

"They are entered in the 'hulk-book' in your name."

"The devil they are! It is strange that people should take my name in vain so eternally. I must see to it. These cursed Hessians, Mrs. Eveleigh, are the greatest rogues and drunkards in the world. I will see to the matter. If the negroes are there, when I make the inquiry, I will send you an order for them. Let me have your address, if you please."

"I am with my friend, Mrs. Merchant, in Church street."

"Mrs. Merchant," writing. "The Merchants are all our friends. And now, Mrs. Eveleigh, as I have already said, if the negroes of Captain Porgy are really in the 'hulk'—"

"You forget, Colonel Moncrieff, that I have just told you that I myself have seen them there."

"Pardon me, madam; I do not forget. But you do not know these Hessians. If they have had the audacity to enter these negroes in my name, they will not scruple at doing worse. They will be very apt to hide them elsewhere, the moment they suspect that they are in danger of detection."

"So much the more important, Colonel Moncrieff, that I should have the order for them promptly, and before they get wind of their danger. But, in fact, there is no chance of their doing as you suppose; for, before I came here apprehending this very danger, I procured the assistance of three vigilant friends, who

are now watching every movement at the 'hulk,' and will follow the negroes wherever they go."

"Then, madam," answered the British colonel, with evident chagrin, "I may as well give you the order out of hand."

"I shall thank you, sir."

"I trust, madam, that your requisitions stop here; for, though very happy to oblige the ladies, and to do justice, my interference will make me many enemies among these rascally Hessians."

"Oh! sir, you will survive that danger. But this is the extent of my demands. I have no doubt that there are many other slaves, about to be fraudulently taken from their owners, but I can advance no proof to this effect."

"The names, if you please, madam, of the negroes, whom you claim for this rebel, Porpoise!"

"Porgy, sir," was the correction, with a quiet smile, as the lady beheld the evident chagrin of her companion.

"Well, madam — Porgy — though both names are sufficiently fish, and of the two, the Porpoise is decidedly the most dignified."

"But less fit for the table, sir," answered the widow, as she proceeded to give the names of the negroes. Moncrieff wrote as she spoke. A few moments were thus consumed; then he threw down his pen, looked at the lady, then among his papers, rose at length with a dissatisfied air, and hurried again to the inner room where he had left M'Kewn and Bostwick. In a few seconds he again returned, still with a manner of some disquiet. Again he stirred up, and glanced over the papers upon his table, but without seeming to satisfy his search. Resuming his seat and pen, at length, he finished the order for the delivery of Porgy's negroes, and rising, handed it with great politeness to the widow, expressing at the same time, in very stately language, the profound delight which he felt in being able to comply with the wishes of a lady whom General Leslie was so well pleased to honor. The widow was not to be outdone in conventional graces. She answered him in terms equally polite and profound; and, with smiles and courtesies, took her departure. He waited upon her to the entrance. When the door had fairly closed behind her, he gave full expression to his chagrin in a burst of wrath and denunciation.

"The d——d cool and confident creature? Hark you, within there, M'Kewn come out!—and you, too, Master Bostwick!—that I may have somebody to curse till I am comfortable. We are handsomely bedevilled, i' faith, and by a woman. But such a woman! In truth, she *is* a woman, and worth half the men I know."

CHAPTER V.

THE OVERSEER, FORDHAM.

THE excellent lady of whom these words were spoken, had, meanwhile quietly taken her place in the carriage which had been awaiting her in the street. The driver was a black, in the livery of Mrs. Merchant, to whom the establishment belonged. Mrs. Eveleigh was not its only occupant. On the back seat, beside her, sat a white man, who had held possession while she remained within the quarters of Moncrieff. Here, he had studiously kept himself from being seen, but had not been the less disposed to maintain a vigilant watch upon all without. He received the widow, on her return, with a manner which was equally attentive and respectful. The appearance of this person was that of one who had not been accustomed to a place so distinguished. He was not abashed, but awkward. He was evidently a backwoodsman, in humble life, wearing the costume of the woodsman of that period, a rather snug-fitting suit of blue homespun, with a sort of hunting-shirt of the same color and material, though without the customary fringes which made it the military garb of the forest rangers, or militia. His face and hands were well embrowned by the sun. The latter were large and rough, and had been well exercised in splitting their two hundred rails per day. The features of his face were large and rough also, but mild, and full of honesty. His great blue eye was expressive of much benevolence, but mixed with a decisive and earnest manliness. The widow addressed him as Mr. Fordham—nay, she called him "Fordham," familiarly, without the prefix, and it did not at all lessen his deference, this freedom. He was, in

fact, the overseer of her plantation, and had been the *employée* of her husband. A long experience had perfectly assured them both of his fidelity and worth. That the widow had chosen him as her companion, on the present occasion, was due to the objects she had in view, and to the necessity of the case. He had been the agent who had successfully discovered the place in which her negroes were confined. By his scheming, the Hessian guards at the "hulk" had been drenched with Jamaica, and access had been procured to that prison, and to the books which identified the slaves with their several British appropriators. In this business he was much more efficient than any of the more eminent friends of Mrs. Eveleigh could have been; and the work being an unpleasant one, she had preferred to employ a person whose services she could compensate, rather than those who, however well pleased to serve her, would yet have found the particular duty somewhat disagreeable. But the good lady, though an aristocrat, was not disposed to underrate Mr. Fordham, as a friend, while employing him as her overseer. She really respected the man, and, as he never trespassed upon her indulgence, she felt that she might safely honor him with her friendship, as well as her interests.

"Well, Fordham," she said, as soon as she had taken her seat beside him, "if you have kept your eyes about you, you have, probably, made a discovery."

"Indeed I have, ma'am! You mean the squatter, Bostwick."

"I was not mistaken in the fellow, then! You saw him?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am; there's no mistaking such a fellow! He came up soon after you went in—pushed in without knocking, jest as ef he was at his own home. But, did he see *you*, ma'am?"

"Yes; but I rather think he believes that I did not see him. Are you sure that he did not see *you*?"

"Quite sure, ma'am. He never once looked this way, and seemed a little beflustered and in a mighty great hurry. I reckon he's found out what we've been after. He's at the bottom of this business."

"I have no doubt of it now. Yet, who could have believed it?—that the wretch could be so ungrateful—and his wife and children living, as it were, out of my hands!"

"He's jest one of that very breed, ma'am, that does this sort of things. No good ever comes out of sich a cre'tur' no more than out of a snake. Warm 'em as you please by your own fireside, and feed 'em kindly out of your own hands, and it makes no difference. Once warm, they're sure to bite you. All their vartue, they seems to think, lies only in their venom. What will you do with him, ma'am?"

"I don't see that anything can be done with him. The proofs against him are, at present, only in our suspicions. Besides, for the sake of the poor, broken-hearted woman, his wife, and his wretched children, I prefer that he should go free."

"Why, yes, ma'am, if one could be sure that he would do no more mischief. But you're not sure of sich a cre'tur' a minute. He's always at something wrong. 'Twould be a monstrous sight better for his wife and children ef he'd clear out with the British. He's as good as one of 'em."

"Perhaps he may."

"A good riddance then for all. But lynching might be of help to him before he goes."

"Nay, I'm not sure of that."

"'Twould *hurt* him then, and that's, anyhow, as much as we ought to care about. But, one thing, I'll tell you, ma'am. Ef he don't clear out when the British go, he'll be of trouble to us yit. We'll have to keep all eyes open, ef he's to stay in the country."

"I must use your eyes then, Fordham, for this purpose, as I have done for so long a time already. I have every confidence in your vigilance and ability, Fordham."

"You may rest on me, ma'am."

"Thank you, Fordham. I feel sure of that. I need not tell you, Fordham, that I have the order for the negroes."

"Captain Porgy's too, ma'am?"

"Yes, both."

"Good! It must have been like physic to the British colonel to have to give 'em up."

"Yes, indeed! But here are the orders, both for Captain Porgy's and mine. You must take the negroes into your own keeping—take them to Moore's house, 'up the path,' and Moore and his two sons will take turns with you, for a few days, in

watching them. We will keep within the garrison till the British troops leave, and our own people march in, and shall then escape any danger from detachments about the country. In a week or ten days we may safely depart. I will leave town with you. Here we are, at Mrs. Merchant's. You will take the carriage, and go at once to the 'hulk.' My friends there, Miles, Johnson, and Sturgis, will help you to procure the negroes, and here is General Leslie's order for keeping them in your possession undisturbed. I will get the protection of our commissioners also, who will be in town to-morrow. Now, Fordham, I leave all in your hands. Good-morning."

CHAPTER VI.

THE OLD ROGUES MAKE NEW PLOTS.

"MAY the foul fiend deliver us from such a woman!" was the exclamation of Moncrieff, as his two confederates entered the apartment; and he swore terribly as "our army did in Flanders."

"Why, what's the matter? anything more—anything worse?" demanded M'Kewn.

"Ay, indeed!" answered Moncrieff, busily looking among his papers—and he told of the further requisition which the widow had made for the negroes of Porgy.

"But you did not give them up?"

"How the devil, could I help it?" was the fierce response of the British colonel. M'Kewn was almost as furious.

"I'd have seen her d——d first!" cried the other.

"Oh! you would, would you? but she would have had the negroes, though you d——d her into the deepest part of your own future dominions."

And he then told of the precaution taken by the wily widow—how she had placed her friends in watch upon the "hulk," leaving them no opportunity for evasion. For the time, they were in her power.

"I would have baffled her if the thing could have been done:

but I saw no way of escape. She has the order, and it will not be long before the negroes are in her keeping."

Moncrieff and M'Kewn were equally savage. Bostwick, who had nothing to lose, and could not be made to disgorge, was comparatively cool and indifferent. The anger of the two former having subsided a little, they began to congratulate themselves that the matter was no worse--that they had got off, in fact, so easily. The requisition might as readily have relieved them of two hundred as of twenty negroes. The question with them was, in what way to save the residue. The widow had only to report what she knew, to the commissioners of the American army, to wrest from them all of their ill-gotten fugitives. Fortunately for them, the commissioners were not then in the city. They were in the American camp, procuring all possible forms of proof for the reclamation of the goods of citizens. They might, and probably would, return to the city, in the space of another day, and the first object with our Arcadians, was how, meanwhile, to secure the rest of the stolen negroes. But the parties interested had their mode of operation, and were not without experience. It will suffice here, if we mention the fact that, but very few of the two hundred remaining in the "hulk," after Mrs. Eveleigh had secured hers, were ever restored to their owners. The next morning, at dawn, found the "hulk" empty, while one of the transports had hauled out into the stream, ready to depart at a given signal. To arrange these matters, our companions needed little discussion.

"And now," said Moncrieff, "now that we have resolved what is to be done, I will give you the order without delay. That drunken rascal, Dort, must be relieved of all such trusts in future. This woman, through some of her friends, has practised upon his love of Hollands. She had never got a peep at those books otherwise. We must give their charge to Witsell. Do you keep here, M'Kewn, and see that Bostwick does not expose the beauties of his face until I send Waldron to you. He will tell you if the coast be clear. For his own sake, it will not do to identify him in my quarters. Indeed, I don't know but that my own character needs the same precaution. You are not, Master Bostwick, the handsomest piece of humanity that the world has witnessed."

"I am jist as God made me, Colonel Moncrieff," responded the squatter, sulkily.

"Pooh! pooh! Bostwick, that's all a mistake. Do you suppose that God made *you* at all? If he did, do you presume to say that you are in just as good condition as when you came out of his hands?"

"Ef I'm changed for the worse, colonel, I know who has helped to change me," and the fellow's eyes looked alternately to his two companions.

"What! you would give us the credit of your bad improvements; but you know better, Bostwick. We found you as you are, a ready made rascal, my lad; and employed you in a business for which your education was complete. But you want money, M'Kewn says? Well, we must give you a little. Five guineas you say? There it is. And now, Master Bostwick, you are pretty well paid. In fact, considering our losses this morning — the seven of the widow Eveleigh, and the seven more of the rebel, Captain Porpoise — seven, is it, or six? — where the d—l can those memorandums be? — I say, considering these losses, you are something overpaid. But we won't be tight with you, my good fellow; and, as M'Kewn hints, I will leave you, at parting, a tolerable supply of stores with which you can do a clever little business, hereafter, with your rebel friends. How does this plan suit you?"

"I reckon it must do, colonel."

"Do! By ——, my good fellow, you are about the most ungrateful, and not easily satisfied scoundrel of my acquaintance!"

"And it's a mighty large one too, I reckon," was the answer of Bostwick, with a grin that seemed to show that he was fully conscious of the sarcasm contained in his reply.

"You are right, my handsome fellow—many rascals in it, no doubt, but no one, by ——, who seems so little grateful for little favors as yourself. But, where, the d—l, are these memorandums? Have you seen them, M'Kewn?"

"You mean those of the negroes?"

"Yes; to be sure! I had them here but a while ago;" and as he spoke, Moncrieff looked suspiciously at Bostwick. He tumbled over the papers on his table, but without effect. He

failed to find what he sought. M'Kewn interested himself also in the search.

"Could the widow have laid hands upon them?" he suddenly asked, with some anxiety.

"No! Impossible!" said Moncrieff, and his eyes again glanced at Bostwick, who sat sullenly beside the fireplace, looking down upon the hearth. M'Kewn also glanced in the same direction; but his mind reverted again to his former suspicion.

"If the widow has laid hands on them, it will be a bad business," said he, apprehensively.

"Pshaw! she wouldn't have touched them for the world. A lady, M'Kewn—a lady."

"If she *did* take them, there's no way of getting them from her."

"I should certainly be the last man to think of demanding them. But, continue the search, M'Kewn. Look among the papers in the other room. I must hurry off to Dort, and see to this business."

When he was gone, M'Kewn exclaimed—

"Lady or no lady, I'll lay my life, that woman has pocketed the papers!"

"What papers?" asked Bostwick, indifferently.

"The papers that will hang you like a dog, fool! The memorandums of all the negroes brought in during the last month, and who brought them, and whence they were taken. My name and yours are both upon the paper."

"Who put 'em there? I can't write. You must ha' done it."

"So I did. I had to keep your accounts as well as my own, with Moncrieff. Look you, Bostwick, we must find out if she's got them, and if she has, we must get them from her, or the country will be too hot to hold us."

"I don't see. There's a paper, you say, with your name and my name; but anybody can write *my* name, and I'm not answerable if I don't write it myself. I reckon, if there's anybody in danger, you are the man."

"You reckon so, do you?—as if my evidence won't convict *you*, should the paper convict *me*;—for I must show how the negroes came into my hands. Don't be a fool, Bostwick. We must get those papers!"

"Well—how? I'm agreeable to anything."

"I'm glad to hear you say so, and to make the necessity seem more reasonable to you, let me hint that we must not only get the papers back, but the negroes. They're as good to you as ready money."

"How can it be done?" asked the squatter.

"I must find out when the widow and the slaves leave town. You can easily pick up half-a-dozen of the fellows of Huck's gang, can't you?"

"For good pay, and guineas in hand, I reckon."

"You shall have them. If we can find out when she leaves town, you can intercept her and recover the papers and the negroes. We shall have a transport sloop at the mouth of the Edisto, off and on, for the next two weeks. In that time the negroes must be off for the plantation, as they will be wanted pretty soon for breaking up the rice land. If you can recover them, you can push down the Edisto in boats, where Barton and Drummond will be on the lookout for you. Do you see?"

"Yes—cl'ar enough. But there's no gitting the boys, without the guineas *in hand*. I'm rather owing them something now, and they won't b'lieve me unless I kin show them the gould."

"You shall be provided. Leave it to me to procure the necessary information, while you go and pick up the refugees. Half-a-dozen stout fellows, in all, will probably answer, and you, yourself, can make the sixth man. The fewer the better. They are more manageable, and the pay will be larger to each. When you have engaged your men, promise *the cash*, and come to me for the money."

Waldron at the moment entered.

"The Colonel says all's clear, Mr. M'Kewn."

"Then I'm off;" said Bostwick. "I know where Dick Norris and Rafe Burke keep, and they can show me the other men I'll come to you at your own place to-night, Mr. M'Kewn."

"Very good, only be sure and keep sober. You will need all your senses."

"I'll walk a crack with you any day," answered the other, as he hurried out of the room with Waldron. For a moment after his departure, M'Kewn sat musing. Then, appearing to

recover his thoughts, he proceeded anew to search for the missing papers among the piles which lay upon the table.

"I'll look," he muttered, "but something tells me that woman has got them. She may do mischief with them, and, unluckily, it's just in her neighborhood now that most of my interest lies. There's that estate of Porgy: my mortgage covers his land.—There's Gillon's, which I've bought out and out—all, as I may say, alongside of her. If she has the papers, though they may absolutely prove nothing certain, they prove too much. She will hardly make use of them *now*. The British going out, and the Americans coming in, will cause a stir for sometime, and she'll be quiet 'till all the hubbub's over. Then!—But that will give us time, and time is half the capital of a wise man. She's a monstrous fine woman. What an eye she carries in her head! What a head! I must see her again! She has a fine estate, almost joining those I got of Gillon."

We need not follow him in his musings. Enough to say that his search was fruitlessly continued, for sometime longer, after the missing papers.

CHAPTER VII.

NEW ISSUES BETWEEN OLD ALLIES.

SATURDAY, the 14th of December, 1782, was the day, memorable in the annals of Charleston, for the evacuation of that city by its British conquerors. They had held possession of it for two years, seven months and two days. Painful to them was the necessity of departing from a region in which they had been so successful in combining profit with pleasure. They had spoiled the Egyptians with a vengeance—had luxuriated in their flesh-pots for a long season, and naturally tore themselves away with reluctance. Nobody suffered more grievously from the necessity than our thirsty colonel of engineers, Moncrieff Yet, no one, probably, had so successfully engaged in the business of "appropriation." His portion of the spoils, in negroes

alone, is estimated at eight hundred. These had been shipped, at various periods, for the West India islands, as soon as it became obvious to all that the war was about to close, and the evacuation was inevitable. Fully two hundred slaves, as we have seen, were about to accompany his departure, all to his credit; the profits of which, in some degree, served to alleviate the disquiet that he felt at the discontinuance of a career, the fruits of which had been so abundant. In respect to these, there was a final conference between himself and M'Kewn, at the dawning of the day assigned for the exodus of the British. M'Kewn sought the British colonel in his chamber, and while the latter was yet yawning dismally, not thoroughly awake, at once over his own broken slumbers, and the cheerlessness of the prospect, the former opened the last business interview that was destined to take place between the parties, by a somewhat abrupt reference to the one matter which particularly concerned himself."

"You have not found the memorandum, colonel?"

"No, d—n it, it is gone, certainly. I have searched everywhere but in vain. Your rascal, Bostwick, has it, in all probability. I can hardly persuade myself that the woman took it. She is too much of a lady."

"That may be, yet I doubt; and, indeed, I'm not so sure that even as a lady, she need have any scruples at putting in her pocket a document which so much concerned her own interest."

"Ah! and that's your opinion?" said Moncrieff, yawning, with an insolent contempt in his manner. "But, permit me to say, M'Kewn, that your habits in life, and business, are not, perhaps, the best calculated to make you a judge in such matters. The rules which govern the conduct of ladies and gentlemen do not necessarily occur to persons in trade. They are, perhaps, almost exclusively understood by those only whose life from the beginning has been in society, and among that class which finds its chief occupation in this very study. Now, you are a shrewd man of business, M'Kewn—devilish shrewd as a man of business—one may say wise, indeed—certainly, monstrous knowing—but you will admit that you have paid but small attention to the affairs of polite society. You can not well understand them, my good fellow. Permit me to repeat that

Mrs. Eveleigh, who was born in the purple chamber of aristocracy, never could have taken this paper:—never! never!"

M'Kewn's brow became contracted as he listened to this offensive speech. It betrayed the contempt, without any desire for the concealment, with which the insolent official regarded him. All motives for concealing this contempt were at an end. The intercourse was over between them. The orange had been fully sucked, and M'Kewn could no longer be of use to the avarice of his employer. He felt all this, in an instant, but it was not his policy to express the indignation which it provoked. A sharp sarcasm, indeed, almost forced its way between his teeth; but he crushed them together, at the peril of his lips, and held his peace until the impulse was over. Then he said, quietly—

"Bostwick, I know, could not have taken the paper, for the scoundrel can't read a syllable, and knew not that such a paper was in existence. The temptation to the widow, Eveleigh, was great, and if she has it in her possession, the affair becomes a very serious one to me."

"Why, yes," rejoined the other, with an air of the greatest sang froid, "it might hang you, M'Kewn."

"Hardly that; but it would ruin me."

"You have managed badly. Why did you invest in real estate? How could you expect to make away with it? How could you expect to remain after our departure? Whether this paper arises or not, you are surely committed irrevocably with the rebels. Here you have been a contractor for the British army—you were one of the addressers of Sir Henry—an unforgivable offence. That you are a creditor of some of the rebels, and hold mortgages upon their estates, are only additional reasons for the confiscation of your property, and the endangering of your personal safety. It has always seemed to me the greatest folly that you should think to remain. It is not too late to determine more wisely. Abandon these villanous acres, these liens, which will be wholly worthless to you, and get yourself aboard the fleet before the army moves."

M'Kewn seemed to brood upon the suggestion for a few moments, then looking up suddenly, replied—

"No! it is now impossible. I should be a beggar elsewhere. My whole capital consists in these lands, and these liens are

my whole stock in trade. I must take my chance. I do not think that my debtors, though rebels, will take advantage of my situation; and but for this accursed paper——"

"Oh! d—n the paper! Let's hear no more about it. You see my desk there. It contains the only papers in my possession which I have not destroyed. These will go with me, and can never rise against you. I can say no more on the subject. I repeat, you are an idiot if you stay. You can not hope for safety. Take to the fleet, and be aboard as soon as you can. This is my last and best counsel."

M'Kown longed to utter the savage answer which he could have spoken—longed to snap his fingers in the face of the insolent Briton, and tell him that while he fancied that he used him, he was himself used—that he had guarantees of safety of which the other did not dream, and which, had he known, would have probably insured him a British, quite as soon as an American gallows;—but the moment for such daring had not come by several hours. He reserved himself for this relation to the moment when the American army was fairly within the city. A slight smile, therefore, was employed to shadow his future purpose. Moncrieff did not perceive the sinister meaning of this smile—he added—rather contemptuously than kindly—

"If you reject my counsel you will deserve your fate. Yet, I assure you, M'Kown, it will distress me to hear that so shrewd a business man has been suddenly made to ride a wooden horse, and unprovided with stirrups."

"I see that you have nothing further for me, colonel," was the only answer of M'Kown.

"No, my good fellow, nothing. Take yourself off, now, while I make my toilet. There is the morning gun. You can see me on the march if you desire it; but i' faith, the ceremony of parting is usually so dismal and distressing, that I do not know but we may well dispense with it. At all events, for the present, M'Kown, good morning—good morning."

"The selfish and narrow-minded scoundrel!" muttered M'Kown, as he slowly wound his way down the staircase.

"What a bore!" exclaimed Monerieff, as the other disappeared. "With his d——d memorandn! What do I care if they do hang him! That he should presume to know the laws

of honor for gentleman or lady. He deserves to be hanged for that, if nothing else. Ho! there, Waldron."

And ringing his bell furiously, our excellent colonel entered upon the duties of his toilet.

Meanwhile, the business of the day was fairly begun in the American camp, and within the lines of the garrison. By a plan previously agreed upon between General Leslie of the one, and General Greene of the other army, the British column was to be in motion at the firing of the morning gun, withdrawing from the lines, near Shubrick's farm, and moving through the city to the wharves. At the same moment, the advance of the Americans, under General Wayne—who had been approaching from Ashley Ferry, where Greene's army lay—was to follow slowly upon their footsteps, until the city, abandoned by the one, should be fully occupied by the forces of the other. The fleet of the British, more than three hundred sail, lay at anchor in the roads, stretching, in a beautiful crescent, from Fort Johnson to Five Fathom Hole. "It was a grand and pleasing sight," says old Moultrie, who accompanied Greene in his triumphal entry. Not less pleasing to the war-worn and returning patriots, and the brave glorious dames, who cheered them in their weary struggle, was the progress of the troops of the conqueror, sullenly retiring from their places of pleasure and pasturage. The windows, balconies, housetops, in all the principal streets, were crowded with happy smiling faces, beholding with equal joy the departure of the one dynasty, and the reappearance of the other. At an early hour of the day the embarkation of the British began, but it was not till near eleven, A. M., when the rear-guard began to file, with measured steps, through the centre of the city. Wayne's detachment, consisting of three hundred light infantry, twenty artillery with two six-pounders, and eighty of Lee's cavalry, following them at an interval of two hundred yards only, constituted the advance of the American army. It was a novel situation for both parties to approach to such propinquity yet keep from blows; and the British evinced no small feeling of disquiet, as, in the impatience of the former, to obtain possession of that city for which they had so long been striving, they pressed forward at a pace which promised to unite the two armies in one indistinguishable mass.

"This must not be," cried a British officer, riding up to the head of the Americans; "you are too fast upon us, gentlemen —you press upon us too closely."

The American general was compelled to call a halt,—and then the shouts rose from the housetops and the balconies, while trumpets blared, and a thousand palmetto banners were flung out in air as the cry went up—

"Welcome, welcome home, brave hearts! God bless you, gallant gentlemen!"

"How the brutes howl!" muttered Moncrieff to one who at that moment jogged his elbow. "Ah! is it you, M'Kewn? You are just in time to say farewell."

"But I shall not say it, sir," was the reply, in a tone, and with a manner which at once drew upon the speaker the astonished attention of the British officer.

"Eh! what's the matter now?"

"Read that at your leisure, Colonel Moncrieff," said M'Kewn, handing him a billet where he stood, curbing his chafing steed, beneath a low balcony near Chalmers, in Meeting street. Moncrieff took the paper, and proceeded to open it on the spot.

"It will teach you, sir," continued M'Kewn, "that you were never more *my tool* than when you thought me yours!"

With these words he disappeared within the dwelling before which the scene took place. Moncrieff, astonished, looked about him, but not seeing the speaker, he turned to the billet. In a moment his eyes glittered with sudden rage, and in the next instant the voice of M'Kewn from the balcony above gave new impulse to his fury.

"Rather a new feature in the history, Colonel Moncrieff!"

"Ha! villain, but you shall not escape me!" and, thus speaking, he dashed up to the balcony, which, on horseback as he was, his drawn weapon might have reached. But the side walks were covered with spectators, who were not disposed to give way, and one of these, an old man with a great white beard, but sturdy and fearless, grasped the bridle of the horse and forced him back. At the same moment, Major Barry hurried forward, threw himself between, and drew Moncrieff away. The procession was again in motion.

What are you at, Moncrieff?—this will never do. A single

rashness will bring their whole force upon us, and three fourths of our army are already embarked!"

"D—n the scoundrel!" was the exclamation of Moncrieff as he suffered himself to be led away. "I would give fifty guineas for a chance at his ear!" and, glaring as he spoke, like a hyena, at the balcony where M'Kewn stood, the centre of a crowd of men and women, he was answered by a gain from his former ally which added a hundred-fold to his vexation. The concourse beheld this singular scene, and many of them heard the language which the British colonel had employed. The circumstance raised M'Kewn inconceivably in their estimation. The man who had provoked the ire of Moncrieff was necessarily, in that period and place, a patriot. But the procession moved on, and the parties were soon separated.

The clamors increased. The trumpets rang forth more merry peals. As the rich scarlet uniforms of the British disappeared into Broad street, great festoons were swung across Meeting, which they had left, and the crowds increased in the balconies. Then, as Wayne pressed forward with his blue coats, in double quick time, the shouts went up in redoubled peals. Rolled onward the solemn artillery—galloped forward the gay horsemen of Lee's squadron—while the rattle of drums in the distance announced the gradual approach of the main army of the Americans. At 3 P. M., the rear-guard announced the approach of General Greene; the governor of the state, Mathews; with the council of state; closely followed by General Gist and the brave old Moultrie, and accompanied by a noble civic procession. This *cortege* halted in Broad street, opposite the spot now occupied by the Bank of South Carolina, and the shouts of welcome which hailed the appearance of the defenders of the country, announced the final embarkation of the foe. Trumpets sounded merrily—drums rolled from a hundred conspicuous points, and the cannon belched forth their mighty thunders, in echo to the general voice of public thanksgiving.

CHAPTER VIII.

PLOTS ALL ROUND THE TABLE.

The day passed off in pleasurable excitements which did not end with the night. An illumination followed, and every house was thrown wide for the reception of friends and visiters. The military bands were in full requisition; and the merry violin, sounding from this or that great house, in almost every street of the city denoted the extempore dancing-party, and the joyful reunion of long separated friends and dear ones. Formality interposed to mar none of the conviviality. There were no tedious ceremonials. The strangers were known friends, and successful valor, and unquestioned patriotism, were to be honored and rewarded. There had been little time, and less means, for any stately ceremonials. Invitations had not been given out, but were commonly understood; and every gentleman knew that he was welcome at every whig mansion. Doors everywhere were thrown wide, and the gay cavalier passed from one to another dwelling, sure to find in all an attraction and a welcome.

It was at one of these dwellings, in Broad street, that Mrs. Eveleigh was, for the evening, an honored guest. A considerable party had assembled, when General Greene made his appearance with his suite. Moultrie came soon after, with good-natured visage, looking the very personification of peace and good-will to men. There were stately cavaliers in train from Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware—the old North state was honorably represented in more than one tall and portly soldier, while Georgia had two or three handsome blue-eyed and round-faced youths, following the wake of the fiery Wayne. The assemblage, hastily conceived and promiscuously brought together, was nevertheless, comparatively, a brilliant one. We do not propose to describe it more particularly.

It was while the rooms were most crowded, that Mrs. Eveigh was suddenly surprised by the entrance of M'Kewn, whom

she had known only as the associate of Moncrieff, and by the memoranda which she still held in her possession. He approached the hostess, Mrs. W———, with the easy assurance of one who has no doubt of his reception. Mrs Eveleigh watched curiously to see what that reception would be. To her increased surprise, she found it affable in the extreme. M'Kewn was next seen among the gentlemen. With these, also, he seemed to enjoy an excellent understanding. Her surprise underwent still further increase, as she discovered in the persons with whom he seemed most at home, none but unquestionable patriots. By one of these she saw him led up to General Greene, and introduced; a few words were whispered in the general's ear by the gentleman who did the courtesy on this occasion, and Greene was then seen to shake M'Kewn's hand with a hearty and nervous grasp. Good Mrs. Eveleigh knew not what to think. She turned to a gentleman who sat beside her, whom she well knew, and asked:

"Who is that person just introduced to General Greene—he to whom General Moultrie is now speaking?"

"His name is M'Kewn—he is, or was, a Scotch merchant here, but I believe he has declined business recently. He is a man of substance."

"The general seems to view him with favor."

"Well they may, if all's true that is said of him. He is one of the few Scotchmen who have been with us during the war. He was one of the addressors of Sir Henry Clinton, but his ostentatious loyalty was only employed as a cover for his revolutionary principles. He has been one of the spies, in part, upon the garrison, and has frequently served Marion with information of the state of affairs."

"His being a Scotchman, yet a spy for us, does not speak much for principle of any kind. I suppose he feathered his nest by it."

"Ah!" with a shrug, "we must not be too scrupulous about the quality of the tool we use if we pick the lock with it."

"Perhaps not: the necessity of the case is to be considered, surely. But is it certain that Marion got any really valuable information out of him?"

"That is a problem. But you seem curious in respect to this person. Have you any reason for it?"

"I have; and I must consult you in regard to it and him. But not now. I see that he approaches."

The companion of Mrs. Eveleigh was, in that day, a very celebrated Carolina lawyer, and, subsequently, the widow unfolded to him the discoveries which she had made.

"I am not at all surprised at it," was the reply. "It is certain that M'Kewn has grown wealthy. He is proprietor of several large estates, or rather has liens upon them, for advances made at enormous interest. A foreclosure of these mortgages, at this moment, when there is no money in the country, would give him these estates at his own prices. These papers which you possess would be fatal to him. But, unless he proceeds to extremities with his debtors, it may be well not to use them."

"Should he not be made to disgorge?"

"Yes, if there be any good whig who suffers by him. But in all probability most of his debtors are tories, and they will scarcely oppose his action."

The good widow shook her head.

"He has other victims. I knew of one at least, a true patriot —a strange creature—of many eccentricities, but of many noble qualities and of much real talent. He has been the loser already by this M'Kewn. I recovered half-a-dozen slaves for him, when I got my own out of the hulk."

"You mean Porgy?"

"Yes!"

"Oh, we must save Porgy—and we will! But, for the present, keep perfectly quiet. We are yet in the storm. Government is only nominally established—we know not what may follow; keep an eye on the fellow—that is enough for the present—and, with these papers, we can bring him up with a short word at any moment."

Enough of this conversation—which took place the day after the party at Mrs. W———'s. To that let us now return. The approach of M'Kewn to the place where Mrs. Eveleigh sat, followed very soon after the moment when she discovered his presence in the assembly. He appeared to see her suddenly; but, we may state, from our own knowledge, that his motive for appearing in that particular assembly, that night, was the result of his previous knowledge that he should be sure to meet her

there. He had taken sufficient pains to satisfy himself on this point. His object in desiring to see her should be obvious to the reader. He was deeply interested in knowing whether she had possessed herself of the missing paper which so greatly compromised him. His notion was that, as a woman, she would in some way betray her knowledge — by look, word, manner — and thus enable him to determine upon the necessity before him, and the game which he would need to play. But the Widow Eveleigh was no ordinary woman. She was a good whist-player, and when you find a good whist-player among women, be sure that she knows how to keep a secret. Her trumpet never announces the number or the value of her trump cards.

A smile and bow — a look and manner of the profoundest courtesy — mingled with that sort of triumphant pleasure which might be supposed to appear in the faces of all good citizens at such a moment — distinguished the address of Mr. M'Kewn, as he stood before Mrs. Eveleigh. The lady acknowledged his address with a courtesy sufficiently decided to make no revelations. M'Kewn took the seat beside her, which her late companion had just vacated, and, in the current phrase of the hour, congratulated her on the grateful change which the country had undergone. She answered him in a manner of perfect good faith, avoiding with care every look or word which the most jealous nature might construe into suspicion or sarcasm.

"It is certainly an event at which every good citizen should rejoice, Mr. M'Kewn. Our people have gone through a terrible trial. They have shown themselves worthy of the liberties they have won. It is to be hoped that they will now prove themselves worthy to retain them."

"A more difficult matter. But we must hope, my dear madam. It is something in proof of their capacity to keep, that they have shown the capacity to win. I found you lately engaged in a somewhat unpleasant business. I trust you were successful in getting back your negroes."

"I was, sir."

"You were then much more fortunate than some of your neighbors. I have much trouble with Col. Monoriefi in removing some of my own, and was only in part successful."

"Indeed."

"Yes; I have lost a number, and was quite satisfied not to have lost all. The British have had their emissaries all over the country, and some of those creatures, madam, were such as we should little suspect. When you found me with Colonel Moncrieff, I was endeavoring to procure some clews to their detection, for it is impossible but that some of these wretches will still remain in the country."

"Were you successful in your inquiries, sir?"

"Not altogether; but I fancy I have some clews in regard to one or more of our neighbors. You are aware, madam, that I have become the proprietor of an estate near yours on the Ashepoo?"

"No, sir, I was not, whose, pray?"

"Gillon's. I took it for a debt; shall send up negroes to work it, and hope to find myself one of your neighbors in the spring, if not before."

The lady bowed rather stiffly, but said nothing. The wily M'Kewn construed her manner into a confirmation of his suspicions. If it had been her object to baffle his scrutiny in regard to the missing paper, she had lost a point in the game. There was a brief pause in the conversation, which M'Kewn, at length, resumed by returning to the subject of his interview with Moncrieff. He told a very pretty little story of the ingenious processes by which he had succeeded in recovering his negroes, and concluded by stating that Moncrieff and himself had quarrelled finally.

"But I had the last word, Mrs. Eveleigh, and one that he will remember. I was compelled to bear his insolence while the British garrison was yet in possession, but, in the moment of his departure, and when he could no longer exercise his power, I gave him my opinion of his character."

He then told of the final passage already detailed between himself and Moncrieff. The note which he had put into the hands of the latter, he described as full of the most stinging insult. The lady could not forbear the sarcasm, which she yet uttered very quietly, and with a seeming unconsciousness of its latent meaning.

"Certainly a very daring proceeding, Mr. M'Kewn. But, if I recollect rightly, Wayne's advance was within a hundred

yards of you at the moment. Of that, however, you were unaware."

A slight flush tinged the dark cheeks of M'Kewn; but he answered calmly.

"No, indeed, Mrs. Eveleigh—I knew it well enough; and knew that, were it otherwise, I should have perilled my neck to have done what I did. There would have been no sense or even courage in speaking freely, what I thought of the scoundrel, at a time when I should have no power to contend with him. I did all that I properly could in expressing my sense of his rascality."

The lady appeared to hear him indifferently. He discovered this, and soon after withdrew from her side.

"Fool!" thought Mrs. Eveleigh, as he moved away. "Does he think to delude me with his inventions?"

"She has the paper!" muttered M'Kewn, at the same moment; "and now to ascertain when she leaves town."

His spies were set accordingly; and instructed to watch every movement of the widow. They did their duty faithfully. The very next day, the squatter, Bostwick, was in attendance upon his employer.

"Well, Bostwick, have you got the fellows?"

"Five of the best bloodhounds in the country. But I must have money for 'em. I'm at great expense in keeping 'em. Jest simple meat and drink won't answer to keep 'em quiet. You must soak 'em and stuff 'em,—of you leave an empty place in 'em, they begins to be good and religious-like, and to talk about sins and sich like matters."

"Pshaw!"

"It's mother-truth, I'm telling you. There's no keeping 'em properly sinful for your wants, onless I'm a drenching and stuffing 'em. It is something's a-wanting from morning to night. They wants everything they sees or thinks about, and they say they've a right to all I can git."

"But you forget,—you agreed with them for a certain price."

"Yes! that was the pay when the work was done. But I was to keep them in the meantime, you know, and it's mighty hard work. They're all asleep now at Broddus's, up the path. They was most eternally drunk last night, broke all the win-

dows, and killed Broddus's dog—so them's to be paid for. Broddus says the windows is two dollars, and the dog cost him two guineas."

"The devil! And you expect me to pay this fellow?"

"In course—it's only reason—seeing as how these boys is in your keeping."

"But I'll do no such thing."

"You'll hav' to, M'Kewn, so it's no use to kick agin it. They will git drunk, and when they're drunk, they will splurge and shine. There's no hendering 'em."

"And you?"

"Oh! I must drink with them, you know——"

"And splurge and shine too, I suppose; break windows, kill dogs, and expect me to square the bill."

"In course. It's the life we lead, and belongs to the business, and one part jest as much as the other. The man what sells himself to the devil, must in nater hev' a sort of devil's edication, and must play devil's tricks. It keeps the hand in for devil's business."

"Well, it's some consolation that we shall not have the keeping of such rascals very long. This woman leaves town next week."

"Which day?"

"Friday, I think—but we shall find out."

"Friday, a bad day for a start. Hangman's day."

"Yes; a bad day for her, as she will start then. You will set out the day before, and choose your place of ambush. Remember, Bostwick, you are not to fail. Your pay depends upon it;—the negroes you will recapture, depend upon it—and your neck depends upon it; for she certainly has got the paper."

"I reckon it's *your* neck jest as much as mine, M'Kewn, so you'll jest please to stop with that sort of talking. Nobody likes to have the rope and gallows constantly flung in his face, jest when he's thinking of other things. As for my name on the paper, it oughtn't to consarn me so much, seeing as how I didn't put it thar. But you did, and you put your own too, and I reckon when they're h'isting me on the cross-trees, they'll be singing you off to make room. If you wants me to be reason-

able and do your business, you'll jest stop with a sort of talk which makes my blood bile agin you."

"Well! well! since you're so nice about this hanging, I'll say rope to you no more."

"Better not—t'ain't advisable, no how. It's better to talk of the business atween us. I must have money for the keeping of the boys."

"Here is three guineas——"

"Why, there's six on us."

"If there were sixty, I have no more money about me."

"It takes pretty nigh a guinea a day to keep 'em, as they expects to be kept."

"Damn their expectations! Do they suppose me to be made of money? You must make them more reasonable, Bostwick, for you yourself will lose by it in the end."

"I don't see."

"But I do!—make these three guineas answer for the week and come to me at the end of it."

"I'll be sure to do that, whether the week's at an end or not. Tiger-cats must be fed."

"Ay, but as tiger-cats only, and not as lions. Remember the difference, if you please. You have taken care that none of them know me in the business?"

"To be sure? make yourself easy that."

"Make yourself ready, and see that they are quite sober when the work is done; and when you have got the negroes and paper, push down the Edisto, where I will contrive to meet you, and get the negroes off to the transport sloop. But we'll talk over these particulars before you start."

Here the conference ended. We have been content to give a sample of it only. There was much more said, unavoidably, between the parties, which it is not necessary that we should chronicle. The week passed, and M'Kewn was called upon to disgorge other guineas, and meet other bills for damages done by his dogs in keeping. Meanwhile, Mrs. Eveleigh was making her preparations. On Wednesday, not on Friday, she set out for her plantation, accompanied by her negroes, and these of Porgy—her overseer, and her son—the latter a youth of fifteen. But we shall introduce this lad more formally hereafter.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SOLDIER SURVIVES HIS OCCUPATION.

We must now change the scene of operations, and introduce new parties to our drama. Let us present ourselves at the camp of Marion, at the head of Cooper river. The reader will, perhaps, have observed that, in speaking of the departure of the British forces from the city of Charleston, and the grand entry of the American troops at their heels, we said nothing of the militia, the rangers, the famous Partisans, cavalry and foot, of Marion, Sumter, Maham, and the many other brilliant cavaliers, whose sleepless activity, great audacity, and frequent successes, had, perhaps more than any other influence, kept alive the hopes and maintained the cause of liberty in Carolina, at a period when Fate seemed to have decreed the utter subjugation of the country by the enemy.

The fact is, none of these gallant spirits were permitted to be present at the reoccupation of the metropolis by the patriot army! They had shared the usual fortune of modest merit; had served their purpose, and had survived their uses. The work done, the game won, they had been thrown aside, as the orange sucked of its contents, with no more scruple or concern. It will scarcely be believed, but such is the fact, that the militia of the country were especially denied the privilege of being spectators of the departure of that enemy against whom none had battled more ceaselessly, more fearlessly, or with better success, than themselves. It might have been that they were too *nude* to be seen on such a brilliant occasion. They were, verily, very nigh to utter nakedness. They were mostly in rags. Their rents of garment were closed by bandages of green moss. Their shoulders and hips were thus, in like manner, padded, as a protection against abrasion by the belts which they had to wear, bearing their arms and ammunition. They were commonly shoeless and hatless. Raw hides made the shoes of many.

wrought roughly, moccasin fashion, into mere troughs for the feet, the seams running down, and gathering up the edges of the leather, from the instep to the toes. A fragment of coarse cotton, or a ragged handkerchief, wound about like a turban, was the substitute with many for a hat; while, with a still greater number, the skins of "coon or possum," untanned, untrimmed, and with the tail jauntily stuck out on the side, made caps of every pattern, and of fashions the most extraordinary. Their weapons were of similar diversity; from the long ducking gun of the planter, to the short fusee of the German yager; the heavy tower musket of George the Third, to the long rifle of the mountain rangers from that section of the Apalachian slopes, which divides, or rather unites, the states of North and South Carolina and Georgia. Sabres, wrought from mill-saws, with handles of common wood, graced the thighs of half the dragoons.

Such equipment would scarcely have made a brilliant showing in a scene so brilliant as that witnessed at the recovery of Charleston. Whether it would not have been most noble and impressive, as illustrating the true worth and honest patriotism of the partisans, is a matter which the reader will take into consideration. It, certainly, was not considered by the ruling powers at that period, or considered only as calculated to subtract from the splendors of the triumphal pageant. But the reasoning by which the militia were excluded from the scene was really of a more offensive and objectionable character. An unworthy fear—a dread of the power of a body of troops who were supposed to be less easily brought under the control of authority—who were known to be dissatisfied, and who, it was felt, had just cause for discontent and dissatisfaction—was the true secret of their exclusion from the scene. Badly armed and worse clad, fighting for years amid a thousand other privations, without pay, and almost without thanks or acknowledgment, their achievements slurred over and disparaged, as they have been too frequently since—while the deeds of others were exaggerated and clothed with a false lustre;—it was apprehended that, with the withdrawal of the enemy, they might be disposed to assert their rights, and do justice to themselves. It is possible they might have done so; since humanity is not to be supposed capable, always, of forbearing the exhibition of a just

indignation, under continued wrong and provocation. But the possibility was still a very faint one. They had given no reason for the suspicion. Nay, they had been called in, and kept ready, more than once, under Marion, to suppress the apprehanded outbreaks and insurrections of some of those very continental troops who had been deemed worthy to be present at the event which they were denied to behold.

A deep feeling of indignation, naturally enough, was awakened among our partisans at this ungenerous exclusion. But it did not declare itself, and could not, while under the leaders who had so nobly conducted them throughout the war; and now they were about to be disbanded—to separate from their leaders—to pay the last honors of salute to the colors they had so often watched in the heady storms and vicissitudes of battle, and to retire to their homes—such homes as a war of seven years had left them—homes in ruins;—and to sink unhonored into an obscurity which held forth little promise of distinction in the future, and still less of improving fortunes.

It was in that tract of country, so often distinguished by his active enterprise, lying near the head waters of Cooper river, that Marion assembled his brigade for the purpose of dissolving his connection with them, and their existence as a military society. Their number did not much exceed four hundred men, infantry and horse. At an early hour of the morning, the stir of preparation was begun, and, by nine o'clock, the rolling drums and sharp clamors of the bugle, summoned them to the area of a noble wood of ancient cedars in which they were to take leave of their well-beloved chieftain. At ten, the general appeared among them, attended by all his staff. He was received in deep silence—a silence expressive of emotions too solemn for shouts or words. His face, usually grave, wore a still graver expression than was its wont. His words, always few, were scarcely more copious now, when so much was to be said, even if much was to be left unspoken. There was more than his usual hesitation, in his manner, as he addressed them. His tones slighty trembled, and thus spoke directly to their own feelings. He spoke of their long services, their fidelity to himself and country; the honorable termination of their labors in the field, and the necessity of now sinking back to the no less

honorable duties of the citizen. He assured them that, in him, his old soldiers should always find a personal friend, who, whatever might be the changes of the future, could never forget his sympathy and connection with the past. At the close, they gathered about him, each eager to seize his hand in friendly grips. Nor was he the man to insist upon the dignities and formalities of his position at such a moment. The commander was forgotten in the friend, and the leave-taking was such as might be expected at the breaking up and dispersion of the members of an ancient and loving household. It was midday before he left them, riding slowly away, attended by his suite, and escorted by a small detachment of cavalry. Night found the scene of the encampment silent — no drums rolled — no trumpets sounded — no fires were lighted. The cedars at Watboo, were as lonely, as if they sheltered the graves only of the brave fellows to whose living heads they had so long afforded the most grateful protection.

We can not follow the fortunes of our scattered partisans, pursuing, as they did, a scorp of different routes, each with his thought and heart turned upon some special home and object. Bands of fifty might be seen, on horse or a-foot, taking the route for Orangeburg; other groups went northward, bound for Waccamaw and Peedee; others again moved down the river, taking one or other of the two routes conducting to Charleston, while sundry squads sped directly southward, aiming for the Ashley, the Edisto, the Ashepoo and the Savannah rivers; from all of which regions they had severally been drawn.

We will accompany one of these parties, a group consisting of four persons, all well mounted, and, comparatively speaking, all well armed and caparisoned. Two of them in fact are officers. One of these is a stout, and somewhat plethoric gentleman; full, and smooth, and florid of face, with indubitable signs of a passion for the good things of this life. His features are marked and decisive, with a large capacious nose, a mouth rather feminine and soft, and a chin well defined and masculine. But for the excessive development of the abdominal region, his figure would have been quite worthy of his face. He rode a noble gray, of great size and strength, good blood and bottom, and with his fires but little subdued by hard service.

Beside this person, whose epaulettes showed him to have held a captain's commission, rode a youth, who could not have been more than nineteen years of age. He was slender and tall, but wiry and agile; with features rather pleasing and soft, than expressive; and which might have seemed somewhat lacking in manliness but for the dark bronzing which they had taken from the sun. He was well mounted also, tolerably well dressed, and wore the equipment of a cavalry ensign.

The third person of this party was a man of altogether inferior appearance, tall, rawboned, and awkward, with features harsh and irregular, redeemed only by a certain frankness and honesty of expression, which was derived from a large and gentle eye of hazel, and a broad good-natured mouth. He carried an enormous beard almost of lemon color, and his hair streamed down his shoulders in waving masses, that faintly reminded you of a falling mountain torrent. A stout chunk of a horse, of frame not unsuited to his own, bore his weight. He wore no other uniform than the common blue frock, or hunting shirt of the rangers, a cap of coon skin, and, for weapons, a broadsword, of immense dimensions as from the primitive forges of a son of Anak, and a pair of common pistols. These weapons, we may add, he could use with the left hand only—the right being wanting. He was one of the few who, in the miserable deficiency of the militia service, had survived a hurt which had completely shattered the limb. His safety was due to his own stout heart, and the unflinching promptness of the friend and superior whom he followed. His right arm, torn into strips by a brace of bullets from a musket held within a few paces, was stricken off at his entreaty, by his captain, and the bleeding stump was thrust instantly into hot, seething tar. The wounds healed, Heaven knows how, and he recovered. But for this proceeding he must have perished. At that time, there was not a surgeon in Marion's brigade, and every hurt which affected the limbs of the victim was certain to end in death. Sergeant Millhouse, the man in question, became the devoted adherent of a superior, who had the firmness to comply with the stern requisition of the patient, and himself perform the cruel operation, which the sufferer bore without a groan.

The fourth party in this group is a negro—a native African,

—the slave of the captain; a fellow of flat head and tried fidelity; of enormous mouth, but famous as a cook; of a nose that scarcely pretended to elevate itself on the otherwise plain surface of an acre of face; but of a genius for stews that commended him quite as much as any other of his virtues to the confidence and regards of his master. Tom had a reputation in camp, for his terrapin soups, which made him the admiration of the whole brigade. He well knew his own merits, and was always careful to be in condition to establish them. The sumpter horse which he rode was covered, accordingly, with a variety of kitchen equipage. Pots and kettles were curiously pendant from the saddle, strapped over the negro's thighs, or hanging from his skirts. A sack, which exhibited numerous angles, carried other utensils, to say nothing of pewter plates, iron spoons, knives and forks, and sundry odds and ends of bread and bacon. Tom was really buried in his kitchen baggage. But this seemed to offer no impediment, nor to be felt as an incumbrance. He kept close to the heels of his master, and had as ready an ear for all that was spoken, as any of his superiors. He was not wanting, also, in the occasional comment — the camp-life having done much toward perfecting the republicanism of all the parties.

Our company had ridden a couple of hours from the time of their withdrawal from the "Cedars," and the separation from their ancient comrades; and had compassed, perhaps, eight or ten miles in this interval. Yet, but little conversation had taken place among them, and, though they rode together, they maintained comparative silence. Our captain, who bore the name of Porgy, was almost the only speaker. He was one, in fact, who possessed a liberal endowment of the gift of language, and greatly delighted, on ordinary occasions, in his own eloquence. But he, too, was influenced, in some degree, by the scene through which they had so recently gone; — by thoughts which were now, perforce, required to meditate the future; and by the sterile country through which they were passing — reaped by the greedy sickles of the enemy, and sending up no cheerful smoke from the homesteads of welcoming friends.

The day itself, from being bright at sunrise, had become overcast with clouds. Chilly, without being cold, it added to the feeling of chill which the circumstances of the day had naturally

occasioned in their hearts. Nor did the solemn, stately, and ever-murmuring and monotonous pine-forests through which they rode—by no means enlivened by occasional tracts of scanty oak, stripped wholly of its foliage, or by the ruins of ancient farms and decaying fences—contribute to lessen the feeling of melancholy which sensibly possessed our little group of travellers.

At length, however, Captain Porgy broke the silence, as he alone had hitherto done, by something that sounded monstrously like an oath, but which we may render into more innocent language.

"By St. Bacchus, Lance, I must drink—I must eat—I must be guilty of some fleshly indulgence! Let us get down here. There is a branch before us, the water of which I have tried before. We have still a bottle of Jamaica. Tom must knock us up a fry, and we must eat and drink, that we may not grow stupid from excessive thinking. If one must think, its most agreeable exercise, to my experience, is ever toast and thinnish. Tom, 'light, old fellow, and get out your cookables. Lance, you carry that Jamaica; I would see if it loses any of its color in these dark and drowsy times."

The command was instantly obeyed: though, to descend out of his pile, to fling off straps to which hung pot and kettle, bread and bacon, &c., was, to Tom, a sort of performance which needed equal discretion and deliberation. He was extricated, at last, though only with the assistance of Sergeant Millhouse; and, having relieved his horse of its luggage, he adjusted himself to his tasks. Very soon, his box of tinder, flint and steel, were in requisition, and he had kindled a pleasant blaze within twenty steps of the running water. To this Captain Porgy, accompanied by Lance, his lieutenant—Lance Frampton being the full name—had at once proceeded; and already had he brightened the clear, but rather unmeaning complexion of the water, with the rich, red liquid of Jamaica. A pewter mug, of moderate dimensions, sufficed for the embrace of the separate fluids; and having first, with his nostrils, inhaled the fragrance of the rum, our captain held it to his eye for a moment, surveying it with a glance of decided complacency, before he carried it to his lips. He drank, smacked his lips with a sense of ex-

dial satisfaction, and offered the cup and bottle to Frampton. But the latter declined the liquor respectfully, and, stooping to the brooklet, drank directly from the running stream. Miller house, the sergeant, was more easily persuaded, and Captain Porgy, as he beheld him pour with liberal hand into the cup, might have entertained some reasonable doubts of the propriety and wisdom of suffering a man with but one hand to adjust his own measures, particularly where the source of supply was so distressingly small. But he suffered the soldier to help himself, and, retiring a few paces, let himself down — no easy matter — at the foot of a pine, where the straw of previous seasons afforded a couch of tolerable softness. Hither, when the horses were fastened, came the ensign, Frampton, while the sergeant, Miller house, bestowed himself more particularly upon Tom, the sobs. A hoarse sigh, that, issuing from a plethoric chest, might have been held a groan, betrayed, in Captain Porgy, a more than usually serious sense of his situation. The ensign, who had thrown himself down on the opposite side of the tree, modestly remarked —

"I think, Captain Porgy, you are more sorrowful than I ever saw you before. Indeed, I can't say that I ever saw you sorrowful till now."

"Well: quite likely, Lanet; — I have reason for it. Othello's occupation's gone."

"Othello, captain? Was the gentleman a soldier?"

"Ay, indeed, a Moorish soldier! — a blackamoor — a sort of negro — of whom, it is quite likely, you have never heard — of whom you will, probably, hear no more than I shall tell you. He was a famous fighter in his day; but these came a day when his wars were ended — like ours — and then! —"

"And then?"

"He swallowed his sword through an artificial mouth!"

"What? How? Swallowed his sword?"

"In other words, cut his throat!"

"What! because he could no longer cut the throats of other people?"

"Partly that — and reason enough, too! Throat-cutting was his business. Nobody ought to survive his business. Now, if I were quite sure that my wars were wholly ended — that I should

never be permitted to cut throats again, according to law—I should certainly request of you the favor, Lance, as an act of friendship, to pass the edge of your sabre across my jugular."

"I should do no such thing, Captain Porgy."

"Oh, yes! you would—that is, if I particularly requested it; and I don't know but I shall have to do so yet. You will certainly oblige me, Lance, when the necessity shall arrive, and when I make the entreaty."

"I don't think, captain. No! I could never do it."

"Oh, yes, you will; but the necessity is not apparent yet, since my nose tells me that Tom has still some material left, by which my throat shall find agreeable employment. I suppose, so long as one may tickle his throat with fish, flesh, and fowl, and soothe it with Jamaica, he may still endure a life relieved of its usual occupations. But, this is the doubt, Lance. How long shall there be fish, and flesh, and fowl, and Jamaica? I am a ruined man! I go back to the ancient homestead of my fathers, to find it desolate. Negroes gone, lands under mortgage, and not a rooster remaining in the poultry-yard, to crow me a welcome to dinner. Such a prospect does not terrify you. You have not been reared and trained to position, and artificial wants. You are young, just at the entrance of life, my dear boy, and can turn your hand to a thousand occupations, each of which shall supply your wants. Such is not the case with me. At forty-five, neither heart nor head, nor hand, possesses any such flexibility. A seven years' apprenticeship to war has left me resources in peace. Othello's occupation's gone!—gone! There is little or nothing now that I should live for;—family, wife, friends, fortune—I have none;—loneliness, poverty, desolation—these are the only prospects before me!"

This was spoken with so much real mournfulness that it compelled the warmest sympathies of the youthful hearer, who, in spite of many eccentricities on the part of the speaker, which he failed to understand, and a strong and active selfishness, which he comprehended well enough, had yet a real affection for his superior. He crept near to Porgy, and said—

"Oh! it can't be as bad as all that, captain. You have many friends. There's General Marion, and there's our colonel, and

many besides; and you've got a fine plantation, and I reckon some of your negroes are left——"

"Tom only! The last accounts reported that every hair of a negro was gone—all carried off by the tories, I suppose, or the British. As for the plantation, it's under mortgage to a d——d shark of a Scotchman; and, even if it were not, it would be worth nothing without the slaves. I tell you, boy, I see no remedy but to get my throat cut like a gentleman, and die in my epaulettes and boots."

"Oh! something will be sure to turn up, captain. Remember what old Ben Brewer used to say when anything misfortunate had happened—'Look up, I say,—God's over all!' God's your friend, captain."

"Well, in truth, Lance, I've so seldom called upon him, among my other friends, that, perhaps, he might do something for me now!"

The irreverence was rebuked by his young companion in the following terms:—

"Oh, captain! don't talk so! He's been doing for you all along! Who has taken care of you till now, when you're forty-five years old? Who saved you so often in fight?—and that's another reason, captain, why you should have faith in his mercies. I reckon God always puts in, at the right time, to save people, if so be they only let him! It's we that won't be saved, and that's continually fighting against his mercies."

"You talk like an oracle, Lance! One thing's certain, that at times, when a fellow discovers that he can do nothing to save himself, the best philosophy is to confide in powers superior to his own. Of one thing rest assured, my lad—I shall never hurry my own case to judgment. I should fear the judge's charge would be against me, let me plead as I might, and be his mercies as great as I could hope for. It will be always time enough to end one's own history; and since I've escaped the British bullet and bayonet, during a seven years' service, I shall certainly not use either to my own disquiet. The smell of Tom's fry, makes my philosophy more cheerful. It is, indeed, surprising how a man's griefs dwindle away toward dinner time. Ho! Tom! are you ready?"

"Jes' ready, mausse," was the prompt reply of the cook.

"Let us eat, Lance. I see that Millhouse has his cleaver out already. Help me with an arm, my boy, while I rise to a sitting posture. I am no small person to heave up into perpendicularity."

Leaving our little group of partisans, for a while, let us return to the widow Eveleigh, on her route homeward.

CHAPTER X.

AMBUSCADE.

Mrs. Eveleigh, as we have already stated, left the city for her plantation on Wednesday, instead of Friday. The change in her arrangements, called for a corresponding change in those of M'Kewn, and the squatter, Bostwick. The latter, with his five confederates, or *employees*, took their departure on Tuesday; and, well knowing the route to be pursued by the widow, sped rapidly for the Edisto, in the neighborhood of which river, they proposed to plant their ambush. Their departure was quite a relief to M'Kewn, as it greatly lessened the expense to which he was necessarily subject, so long as they remained in idleness, and in a vicinity so full of temptations.

We need not note their progress. Conducted by Bostwick, they were not long in reaching their hiding-places, and in taking such a position, west of the Edisto, as would enable them to fasten upon their prey at a bound. The excellent lady, unsuspicious of danger, set forth after breakfast on Wednesday morning, in her great family carriage drawn by four stout horses. The lumbering vehicle of that period need not be particularly described. It is very well known that the carriages of that day were huge, unsightly and heavy machines, very solid structures of wood and iron, which, even when entirely empty, were a sufficient burden for their teams. When occupied by our widow, her son, a youth of sixteen, a maid-servant of no small dimensions, sundry trunks, bags and boxes, filling up every foot of space—and condemned to a lonely progress over rough and

heavy roads, it was inevitable that its movements must be slow. Accordingly, it made no more rapid progress than the plantation wagon which accompanied it, and in which several of the negroes found a place. One or two of these were mounted on mules, while others, the more vigorous, walked, easily keeping up with the carriage. Among these were the half-dozen negroes, belonging to Captain Porgy, whom, as we have seen, the widow was so fortunate, and so firm, as to recover, with her own, from the clutches of Moncrief. The overseer of Mrs. Eveleigh, Fordham, led the *cortege*, mounted on a clumsy, but powerful, sumpter horse, and armed with the well-used long rifle of the country. He carried, besides, in holsters, a pair of large but common pistols. Young Eveleigh was similarly armed. He rode, sometimes with his mother in the carriage, but occasionally left the vehicle for a little 'mustatsky,' or poney, of Spanish breed, such as is to be found very commonly about the parishes of South Carolina to this day—a light, hardy, lively creature, very small, but of great endurance. Young Eveleigh was a tall, handsome and vigorous youth, full of spirit, of a strong will and resolute character.

Properly armed, the party, including the negroes, might have laughed at any demonstration which could be made by the force under Bostwick; but, unsuspicious of danger, they had taken no precautions against it, and travelled as carelessly along as if their course lay through the pathways of the peaceful city. Sometimes, Fordham and young Eveleigh rode together ahead; and other moments they were to be seen about the wagon and negroes, in the rear; and, not unfrequently, when riding ahead, they were out of sight both of wagon and carriage. Bostwick had made all his calculations with due regard to what he knew of the travelling habits of the people on such occasions. The party had been suffered to cross the Edisto at Parker's, and had made some progress upward and toward the Ashepoo, when the hour for "nooning" approached. Of course, carriage and wagon were both well provided with the necessary supplies of provisions; as the lodging houses along the route, few at any time, and with long intervals, had been very generally broken up during the war, upon any but the great thoroughfares.

Fordham and young Eveleigh had ridden forward to find a

branch—a stream of water—or a spring, at which the party might stop. A turn of the road had taken them out of sight of the carriage. The region was well wooded; and the vehicles were passing through a defile of the forest, more than commonly dense. They had just passed an ancient Clubhouse, such as may be found, to this day, throughout the parish country of South Carolina; where, after the day's hunt, the gentry of the surrounding district reassembled for dinner. The house had been disused for this purpose, during the war, and was now in ruins. The planks had been torn off from the frame, which stood up an almost naked skeleton. The floor was gone—the roof could afford no shelter. Weeds and grass, still in rankest luxuriance, environed the decaying fabric, in which, no doubt, during the heats of summer, the serpent and the wild-cat found frequent harborage. Just beyond this spot, a heavy timbered forest spread away to the south, over a low, mucky tract, which the deer and the bear could alone inhabit. The road wound along the edges of this low region, pursuing the higher grounds. It was while the carriage was passing through the dark shadows of this defile, that it was suddenly arrested. The horses were made rudely to recoil, and wheeled about; the vehicle was thrust directly across the road, so as fairly to close it up. The shock awakened Mrs. Eveleigh from a dreamy mood, while the cry of the servant-maid who accompanied her, warned her of some event which required her attention. At first, she fancied that the horses were unruly; but she was soon undeceived. The words of the negro-girl—

"Oh! missis, look a' dem black looking man! He da ketch de horse by de head!"

At that moment the driver cried out—

"Hello! da'—wha' you gwine do wid my hosses?"

He was silenced with a blow from a bludgeon delivered by a hand which he had not seen, and which tumbled him fairly from his seat. Two or three men, covered with masks, and dressed with long, shaggy black hair, through which their wild dark eyes only were visible, now appeared at the side of the carriage, the door of which was torn open in an instant.

"Who are you? What do you mean by this violence?" demanded the widow, looking very pale, but speaking very firmly.

One of them replied harshly, seizing her by the wrist as he spoke—

"Come out, my good woman!—that we may have a good look at your han'some visage!"

"I will come out! Release me. I need no help!"

"All right, ma'am; I'm all civility!" said the fellow, as he made way for her to descend. The negro-girl sat trembling in the carriage, after her mistress had got out.

"Out with you, Jenny!" cried the spokesman, taking the servant by her ears, and with so much effect that she screamed violently.

"Shut up your fish-trap, you ——," he cried, with a terrible voice and oath, "or I'll tear out your tongue, and eat it without bread or gravy."

The threat, and the action by which it was accompanied, caused her to redouble her screams, and to cling the closer to the vehicle; upon which the other jumped in, and tumbled her out headlong, as if she had been a bale of cotton. He then proceeded, with singular industry, to search the carriage; possessing himself, among other things, of a richly inlaid mahogany case, which he drew from beneath the seat. By this time, his confederates had cut the traces, and freed the horses. The servant-girl continued her screams, until flung down, and her mouth bandaged—an operation which was performed by one of the assailants, with the celerity of an old practitioner. The widow Eveleigh, meanwhile, stood silent, anxious, breathless, with expectation and apprehension, but maintaining a noble and fearless demeanor. At this moment, a pistol-shot was heard ahead—then another, and another. At the sound the lady could not suppress the murmur—

"My son—my son! My God! protect my son!"

She clasped her hands with increasing apprehensions, while the new terrors in her face were too strong for concealment; her knees trembled beneath her, and she sank back for support against a tree. Two of the assailants had remained with the carriage. These started into activity as the sound of the fire-arms reached them. They came from the road in front, along which young Eveleigh and Fordham had ridden. A moment only did the outlaws pause; then, simultaneously, darting forward

they hurried in the direction of the scene of action. The widow watched them with eager terrors, as they sped along, chiefly under cover of the trees, pursuing the roadside, but avoiding, as much as possible, the exposure of their persons. Suddenly she saw them crouch beneath opposite trees, and, in a second or two after, the tramp of a horse, at a run, smote their ears. At the sound, one of them raised a light carbine which he carried, and which he cocked in readiness. He had scarcely done so, when young Eveleigh came in sight, pushing the pony to the utmost. Then was heard the cry of the mother—at the top of her voice—but very faintly, at that distance;—reaching the ears of the banditti only:—

"Back, Arthur, back, my son, Beware! beware! There are enemies in ambush!"

The youth seemed to hear, and appeared disposed to gather up his horse: but he was anticipated by the ambush. A shot was fired, and the little steed went down, forward on his face, pitching the youth over his head. The two assailants then darted out of their place of hiding, and threw themselves upon him as he was feebly endeavoring to rise. He struggled as well as he could, being evidently somewhat stunned by his fall; but what could his unhardened sinews avail in a struggle with two ruffians, practised in all sorts of encounter, with frames well set, and in the full vigor of manhood! While they held him down, preparing to bind his arms, the mother rushed toward them, crying aloud—

"Spare him, spare my son, and you shall have all—all! Any thing! only spare him! Let him rise!"

She did not wait to see the effect of her entreaty, but pushed in between the assailants. It was a noble exhibition of maternal courage, reckless for herself, moved only by the one impulse of love and devotion to her young. One of the ruffians seized her and bore her back, while the other kept his knee upon the breast of the youth.

"My son! my son! Spare him! spare him!" she continued to cry, "and I will give you everything."

"Shut up, good woman, shut up! There's no danger, if the young cub will only keep quiet. There's no harm done him yit; and none will happen to him if so be he has sense enough

not to provocate us. I reckon he's done some mischief a'ready. See, Fire Dick"—to his companion—"both pistols is empty."

As he spoke, two fellows, masked and bearded like himself, with false hair, and great handkerchiefs muffling their heads and faces, ran toward them from above. To these, the bandit who had just spoken addressed himself—

"Well! How goes it?"

"Bad enough! Bill Sykes is on his back, and hasn't a word for a dog. This young bull-pup has laid him out with a bullet through the head."

A fierce glance from all parties was addressed to the young man; and having secured the prisoner from whom they had most to fear, they drew aside for a moment to consult.

"What hev' you done with the overseer, Fordham?" demanded one who seemed to be the leader, and who was, in fact, the squatter, Bostwick.

"He's fast."

"You hevn't killed him?"

"No, only stunted him with a backstroke over the head and neck, and then tied him down to a sapling."

"Is he safe?"

"I reckon! He don't move, and kaint!"

"How was it?"

"Why, he got down to drink at the branch, and when he was drinking, Bill Sykes jumped out of the bush, and knocked him into the water with the butt-end of his rifle. As the young fellow seed that, setting on his horse, he let fly at Bill, first one shot, then another, though I reckon 'twas the first bullet that did the thing. Then he wheeled about, and went off at full speed. I pulled on him, but 'twas only a snap; and we had to turn about, Sam and me, to manage Fordham, who had raised himself up out of the water, and was aiming to get at his horse and holsters, where we saw he had two pistols. But I gin him a settler, side of his head, which sprawled him, and Sam took up his horse."

"Well, we must see to business. Bill Sykes, you say, wants no help?"

"He's ate his last bacon!"

"Let him lie then, till we see to our work. We must pick up the niggers, and be off. There's not much time."

"Did you gut the carriage, Bost?" demanded one of the fellows.

"No! there's nothing much, I reckon."

"No money?"

"Not that I see—but I hevn't looked in yet."

"I'll see to that," said Fire Dick, otherwise Dick Norris.

Each of the parties darted off in the direction of the carriage and wagon, except Bostwick; who, having already quietly possessed himself of the mahogany box of Mrs. Eveleigh, which he had somehow contrived to conceal from all parties in the bushes, seemed to take the further adventure quite coolly. To him, as he stood, apparently meditating, the widow now advanced. Her son lay bound and writhing beside the road.

"Is your purpose plunder?" she demanded of the squatter. "Take, then, all that is in the carriage and wagon—money, goods—but release my son, and let us go."

"You've got money in the carriage?" asked the squatter.

"Fifty guineas only, which you will find in a small mahogany box beneath the seat."

"Hem! Well! What else in the box?"

"Nothing but a few papers of value to nobody but myself."

"We must see to that! Do you come with me. The young fellow has killed one of our people. That must be paid for—for, as the Bible says—'life for life!'"

"Take all!" she exclaimed, "all—as I said before, and let us go."

"'Twon't do! We've got all that's *here*, a'ready. There must be *more*, of you would save the young un from a dog's death."

"What, more! How shall I pay you? What sum? When?"

"We'll think about that! But, jest now, look you, I must put a little hitch about your arms."

He pulled a bundle of cord from his pocket as he spoke.

"You will not dare!" exclaimed the lady, drawing herself up with loathing and indignation in her face. Her indignation was felt by her son. The youth shrieked in fury, and writhed desperately in his bonds. But the ruffian was unmoved, and laid his hand upon the arm of the widow. At first she recoiled—her

eyes were filled with such gleams of anger, as promised desperate struggle. But she subdued herself; feeling that any effort at resistance must only expose her to worse indignities. With this reflection she held out her wrists.

"Well! I call that sensible and civil," cried the ruffian: "but the other way, ma'am—behind your back, ef you please. You see, ef I was to tie your hands in front, you might gnaw through."

The calculating rascal! Again the lady recoiled with a natural feeling of loathing and indignation; again, however, the reflection of a moment caused her to subdue it.

"Now, ma'am, ef you please," continued the ruffian, "you'll jest set down with your back to this sapling. You kin lean agin it, you see. 'Twill be a help to you."

She sat down passively, and suffered herself to be fastened to the tree.

"Now, I'll jest warn you to keep quiet. 'Twill be no use to bellow, for there's nobody to hear you but our own people; and they'll not be overquick to help you, onless it's out of the world; for they don't like a woman's hollering when there's no help for it; and it won't take them much to make 'em knock you and the young fellow over the head."

With no more words, having made both the parties as secure as possible, the bandit turned off to join his comrades, leaving the widow with a soul swelling to bursting with fruitless indignation, with fear and ill-suppressed rage, for which she could find no relief even in feminine tears. But, when she looked upon her son, terror, in respect to his danger, suspended every other feeling.

"Oh! Arthur—my son! my son! What is to become of us? They will kill you, my son; they will kill us both!"

The son groaned in answer, and once more writhed desperately, but vainly, in his bonds. Exhausted with his ineffectual struggles and humbled by the sense of shame and impotence, tears, big and scalding, gushed from his eyes, which he closed, in very mortification, as if to conceal the weakness which he could not control.

CHAPTER XI.

A CHANGE IN THE ASPECT OF AFFAIRS.—THE MOUSE GNAWS THROUGH THE LION'S MESHES.

Half an hour might have elapsed, or even a longer period, and the outlaws had all disappeared from the sight of the two fettered parties—having now addressed themselves to the duty of capturing the negroes, and overhauling the wagon, which slowly followed in the rear. But few words had passed between the mother and her son. They had nothing consoling in their thoughts, and no motive, accordingly, for speech. They crouched, gloomy, wretched, and full of apprehensions, on the spot, and against the trees to which they had been separately fastened; when the ear of the widow caught a rustling sound among the bushes behind her, and a moment after heard a voice, which she readily recognised as that of her maid-servant, Jenny. It was at this moment that she remembered that the ruffian who ordered the girl from the coach, and finally hurled her out of it, had called her by her true name—a fact to be remembered.

The girl had been much more fortunate than her mistress. It is true, the outlaws, provoked by her clamors, had bandaged her jaws; but they had neglected, in their anxiety to secure the widow and search the carriage, to bandage her arms also. The sly negro, in the general confusion, and not being a conspicuous personage, was allowed to crawl away unperceived into the bushes; and, in the variety of interests which the outlaws had to consult, remained, for a time, altogether unremembered. While the two, having charge of the widow, ran forward to plant an ambush for the son, the girl had found close shelter in the thickets—had succeeded in stripping the bandage from her jaws, and had so far recovered her wits, or her instincts, as to feel the desire of being useful. Keeping still the cover of the thicket, she had wound her way along the road, though at a safe dis-

tance from it, toward the spot subsequently marked by the struggle with young Eveleigh, and the pinioning of himself and mother; and now she stood, but a few paces distant in the woods, seemingly afraid to venture out upon the public road, on the margin of which the captives had been bound. Her object was to feel if the coast was clear. She could see her mistress and the youth, from her place of harborage, but the highway, up and down, was beyond her survey.

"Hi, missis, hi! Da me! Da Jinney! I jis' want for know ef dem black people gone."

"Oh! Jenny, yes; I don't see them!"

"Look up de road, missis, ef you kin. Le' me yer [hear] wha' you kin see up de road, fus, 'fore I come."

"I see nothing but the carriage. Jenny. I see no person about it. They are gone, but I hear a noise."

"I yer dat noise too, but he's fur away on de road. I kin come out den?"

"Yes you may—but look sharp, Jenny."

"Yer's me!" cried the girl, emerging from the wood. "Lor' a mussy!—an' he tie you, and mass Art'ur! De black debbils—he tie you, missis? You got knife?"

"Put your hand in my pocket—you will find one."

"I hab 'im—le' me cut you loose."

"Arthur first, Jenny," said the mother, earnestly. But the girl was already slashing away at the ploughlines which had been used to secure the mistress. In a moment her arms were free. The mother then seized the knife herself to perform the grateful office of giving freedom to her son. A few more seconds sufficed for this, and the youth sprang up with a new sense of manhood, and full of a fierce desire for the conflict.

"Now, Arthur, my son, fly to the woods—hide yourself—see if you can find a horse, and speed for help."

"No indeed, mother," cried the youth, resuming his empty rifle and pistols, which had been suffered to lie where they had fallen in the scuffle; "do you and Jenny take to the woods. Push down for the swamp, which is only a few hundred yards below, and there hide yourself."

"What do you propose to do, Arthur?" she asked in some trepidation, seeing him proceed to reload his rifle; the outlaws

having thought it quite unnecessary to deprive him of his powder-horn and pouch.

"I must see after Fordham, mother. They may have killed him, or bound him, as they bound us. If he lives, there are two of us, both armed—"

"But two, Arthur, against six."

"Five only, mother, *now!* One you recollect—"

"Yes, yes!"

"Well, two against five, both armed, is no bad ambush: and we shall surprise the rascals. You will see."

"But if poor Fordham should have been killed, my son?"

"I will revenge him!" cried the noble boy, driving home the bullet, and, immediately after, bounding off along the road in the direction of the spot where Fordham had been knocked down. His mother wrung her hands passionately. She dared not call out after him, lest she should alarm other ears; and it was only with a great effort of will that she controlled her feelings, and adopted the youth's counsel, by burying herself in the woods beyond. Yet she only put herself in partial cover. Her anxiety led her still to pursue a course parallel with the road, keeping the same direction with her son.

It did not require many minutes to enable Arthur Eveleigh to cover the space between, and to reach the borders of the creek where the outlaws had attacked the overseer and himself. There were all the signs of the struggle between Fordham and the ruffian who assailed him; but Fordham was not to be seen. While the youth looked about in wonder, he heard his name called by some one in the wood, and reasonably conjectured the person to be the one he sought. He pushed through the bushes to the spot, and found him, bruised and beaten, hardly well recovered from the stunning blow by which he had been felled to the ground—but otherwise not injured. He was tied down to a sapling, as the widow and the youth had been; and beside him, within a couple of feet, lay the corpse of the outlaw, stark and stiff, whom Arthur himself had slain—a spectacle which made the boy shudder, and grow suddenly sick; but which poor Fordham had been compelled to endure for a goodly hour!

But time was pressing. The exigency of the case did not allow Arthur Eveleigh to give way to any nervous emotions,

however natural. Their assailants, as the two reasonably apprehended, might be soon again upon them, and the youth, strongly exerting his moral nature, overcame his sickness, and cut the cords which fettered the overseer. Fordham, on his feet, rapidly recovered himself. His own rifle, and that of the dead man, lay together, with an old pistol belonging to the outlaws. Of these, Arthur and himself took quick possession.

"And now," said Fordham, "I want to see if I can make out this carrion."

And he stooped to examine the body of the slain man. But Arthur turned away—though a strange fascination seemed, a moment after, to compel him to gaze upon the face of the victim, from whose head Fordham had removed a wilderness of false, black, and matted hair. The whiskers came off with like readiness.

"He's a stranger to me," said Fordham. "He's a mighty bad face, and here's a cut over his cheek, a great slash, that looks as if 'twas done with a broadsword, and it hasn't been so very long. I reckon he was some tory. Your shot was well p'inted, Mr. Arthur—it's gone, I reckon, straight through his heart. It's worked a most amazin' big hole in his bosom. See to that."

The youth looked as directed, but turned away quickly.

"Enough, Fordham! We have precious little time. We had better be loading, and putting ourselves in readiness."

"What's to be done? Where's your mother?"

"In the woods with Jenny. I told her to push into the swamp where she could hide so close that a hundred men couldn't find her in a three days' search—"

"Onless it so happened! But you are right. And what now are we to do?"

"There are two of us—there are four or five of these outlaws. They have gone down the road, but will probably return. We can ambush them, as they ambushed us; we have three rifles, and as many pistols."

"Good, Mr. Arthur! But to ambush *them*, we must hide t'other side of the spot where they tied you and your mother. If they git to that spot and find you gone, they'll take the woods on us."

"True! Let's push for it, Fordham."

"I'm consenting," answered the other, who had just finished loading the two rifles. These he took on his shoulder. The pistols were loaded also, and the whole stock of arms pretty equally divided between the two. In a few moments they struck into the woods, Fordham taking the lead, and following the edge of the road, with a bold stride, yet a vigilant eye to every bush that stirred. He had recovered all his energies, and now showed himself, as he was, a thorough master of woodcraft. We leave the two in their progress; having almost reached the spot where the carriage had been halted and turned across the road. At this moment, and when Arthur, seeing nothing, was about to push forward, Fordham caught his wrist, suddenly, and drew him back into the shelter of the thicket. Let us leave them, and look after our outlaws for a while.

CHAPTER XII.

HOW BLACKBIRDS ARE TAKEN, AND HOW BLACKBIRDS FLY.

HAVING, as they fancied, secured the only persons who were likely to give them any trouble—having ransacked the carriage, and taken into their own keeping any small valuables which had previously eluded their search—our banditti, under the conduct of the squatter, Bostwick, now prepared to turn their attention upon the negroes and the approaching wagon. This vehicle might have been three quarters of a mile in the rear of the carriage when the latter was arrested, the inmates taken captive, and the assault made upon Fordham and young Arthur. Of these events, the negroes, by whom the wagon was accompanied and driven, had no sort of conjecture, at the moment when they happened. The road was one of those admirably circuitous ones, so common in our forest country, which seldom afford you a direct survey of the route for three hundred yards together; and, trudging on, with tongues incessantly employed, singing or talking, the negroes had ears for no sounds but those which they themselves produced. The wagon was mostly filled with

stores, sugar, coffee, flour, bacon, blankets, and negro clothes. These loaded it rather heavily for the six mules by which it was drawn. To this load you may add, at intervals, two or three of the negroes, who, from temporary lameness, or a less degree of strength than the rest, were permitted, occasionally, to relieve their fatigue by a lift in the wagon.

One of these negroes, belonging to Captain Porgy, was, by the way, an expert violinist. His only possession was a cracked and ancient fiddle, the seams of which had been carefully, but roughly, closed with resin from the pine trees, gathered as he passed. With this instrument he contrived to increase the noise and the merriment which still accompanied their progress, and to lessen the consciousness of fatigue on the part of his companions. Pomp, or Pompey—that was his name—as might be expected, was a great favorite; and his plea of lameness, we may add, was not examined too closely by the driver of the wagon, when it was remembered that his violin could be made to work while he *played*. The negroes were fourteen in number, seven of them being the property of Mrs. Eveleigh, the rest of Captain Porgy—all of whom, with one exception, had been recovered from the clutches of the insatiate Colonel Moncrieff and his colleagues. These were all walking, with the exception of the wagoner, Tobias, Pomp, the violinist, and Dembo, a young fellow of sixteen—the two latter being within the wagon—Dembo looking out from the opening of the cover, in the rear, while Pomp occupied a similar position in front; the post of honor being naturally claimed for the violin. Tobias bestrode the wheel-horse immediately in front of him, and when Pomp was not actually playing, he and Tobias kept up a running commentary upon the ways before them, the events through which they had passed, their recent captivity in the British hulk, and their fortunate escape at the very last moment. Thus travelling and employed, the party at length wound its way slowly into the plain, at the farthest opening of which—perhaps a quarter of a mile distant—the carriage of the widow could now be seen, awkwardly enough, turned directly across the road.

The situation of this vehicle was first beheld by the pioneer of the party, an able-bodied, fine-looking fellow, named John,

or John Sylvester, as he preferred to be called, after a former owner by whom he had been reared. John was a calm, and rather thoughtful fellow, of quick comprehension, keen sight, and good judgment. He stopped immediately, looked earnestly about him, and, after surveying, for a few moments, the situation of the carriage, he turned quietly back to the wagon and his companions.

"Look yer, Toby"—speaking to Tobias, the wagoner—"dem hoss of missis nebber tu'n dat carriage 'cross de road, as you see 'em. He hab somebody for tu'n 'em so, for sure."

"Ki!" quoth Tobias, looking out and drawing up his team, as he gazed. "wha' dat? He choke up de road for sure. Sartin, John, de hoss nebber tu'n 'em so hese'f [heself]!"

"Nebber!" continued John; "and you see nudder t'ing, Toby—de hoss tek' out and gone! He nebber tek' out hese'f."

"Da's true! Wha' dis!"

"Now, Toby, you hab eye! Look to de little wood ob scrubby oak; you see? You see hoss hitch, and der's a coal black hoss hitch wid udder hoss in dat scrubby oak?"

"I see! Coal black hoss dey, for true, John."

"Missis ain't got no coal black hoss, Toby."

"Nebber."

"Toby, I'm jubous, der's somet'ing wrong in dis bis'ness. Boy, you 'member dat d——n poor buckrah, Bossick? He hab big, rawbone, coal black hoss, same time he catch we, and carry we to town."

"You sure he been Bossick was catch we, John?"

"Enty I know! He big beard like goat, and head o' hair like wolf, nebber been blin' me so I can't tell the d——n blear eye son ob a skunk. I smell 'em out, same as pole-cat in my nose. I tell you, Toby, Bossick was the same poor buckrah been nab we. He de same one was ride de rawbone black. He can't fool dis nigger. I'm jubous dat is Bossick hoss you see dey in de scrubby oak. I'm jubous Bossick is yer in dese parts. I t'ink I feel de smell of de pole-cat in my nose jes' now. Dat carriage aint cross de road for nuttin' [nothing]."

"Well—wha' for do?" demanded Toby, in considerable excitement.

"Da's de t'ing;—but I tell you Toby, John Sylvester neb-

ber guine le' Joe Bossick put he dirty, poor buckrah paw 'pon him shoulder agen! I nebber guine back to dat d—n salt-water hole in de wharf, ef I kin help it. You mus' do wha' you kin! You can't lef' de hosses—dat you know. But, dis nigger will hide hese'f in de wood, and be ready for a run; and you better gi' all dese niggers a chance. Better we bury weso'f up to de neck in de swamp, where we knows de varmints, dan le' 'em carry we off to de British hulk, I'm a t'inking."

"You right! But wha' *me* for do?"

"You stick to de wagon. You will hab for dribe, you know. But Pomp kin skip out wid me; and Dembo dere; and any ob de fellows wha' chooses, kin mek' track [run] same as you see me mek' 'em."

"But you aint guine run 'fore you see wha's a-coming?"

"No! But I guine to stan' ready for wha's a-coming, boy. You see dat close t'ick [thick or thicket] 'pon de lef' ob de road? I'm jubous der's some d——d varmint, like a poor buckrah, da's a-lyin' close 'pon de lookout in dat same t'ick. You dribe slow; I watch 'em. Da's all. You yer [hear], boys? Jes' wha' you see me do, ef you hab sense, you guine do de same as me. De lame nigger wha' can't run, le' 'em lie close and kick! Ef Bossick nebber see nigger legs 'fore to-day, I 'spec he will hab sight dis time! Yer!"

Thus warned and counselled, the negroes were all on the lookout. John Sylvester, for his own part, took care to suffer the wagon to keep between himself and the suspicious wood he had pointed out. Pomp, the violinist, slipped out of the wagon, still keeping his fiddle in hand, and followed in the steps of John. The other negroes, with one or two exceptions, seemed rather stupefied and undetermined, at the notion that they were in some peril of a return to captivity. They crowded together ... the tail of the wagon, as a flock of sheep threatened on all sides. Tobias drove slowly, keeping up a soliloquy, in undertones; which betrayed his fear to his mules if to no other auditors. In this way, the party had advanced about a couple of hundred yards, when a shrill whistle was heard from the thicket to which John had pointed. Tobias drew up at the same instant.

"You ye'r [hear] John Sylbester?" quoth Tobias.

"I ye'r, Toby! You dribe on! Don't you stop! Ef you see anyt'ing like trouble, gee de mule de whip, and push. We only seben mile from home, I t'ink."

"Wha' dat?" cried Tobias. "I see buckrah, for true."

"In de t'ick?"

"He da peep!"

"Ha! de d——d snake in de grass!" was the brief commentary of John, as, squatting, he peered beneath the wheels of the wagon. The mules were again in motion. Hardly had they advanced ten paces, when there was a rush from the thicket. A couple of fierce-looking brigands, black with hair, and beard, and smut appeared a little in front of the mules, each carrying a rifle in his grasp. At that moment, John Sylvester disappeared in the opposite woods; Pomp, still carrying his fiddle, close in his wake. They had barely gained the cover, when three other bandits made their demonstration close beside the wagon.

"Stop, there, you d——d black Belzebub!" was the cry of one of them to the wagoner, who now began to whip up his weary and sluggish mules. The negroes, recovering their consciousness and energies, proceeded to scatter in various directions; but in a state of confusion, which left them doubtful which way to go. The mules were forcibly arrested, and taken out of the wagon. Tobias was tumbled from his perch, still grasping the lines.

"Hello! mussa! wha' dis?" demanded the poor fellow.

A rude blow of the fist, dexterously planted in his jaws, muzzled him completely; and while one of the party roped him, the others scattered in pursuit of the flying negroes. A terrible summons, followed by a pistol-shot, fired over their heads, brought three or four of them to a dead halt. In fear and trembling they suffered themselves to be caught and corded by a single pursuer. With these, Tobias, and a lame fellow in the wagon, the brigands found themselves in possession of six of the the fugitives. There were still eight to be taken, and, leaving one of their number in charge of the captives, two of the four dashed into the opposite woods whither most of the negroes had been seen to fly; while the remaining two hurried back to their horses, in order the better to resume the chase.

CHAPTER XIII.

"TOO QUICK ON TRIGGER."

It will be remembered, at the close of the scene that witnessed the extrication of young Arthur from his bonds, and the recovery of Fordham, the overseer, that these two had advanced to the place where the assault had been made upon the carriage; and that, when the former was about to emerge eagerly from cover, he was arrested suddenly by his companion, in consequence of some discovery which had been made by the latter. The discovery was that of the horses of the party, which, as we have seen, were all fastened to swinging limbs of trees, in the cover of a little clump of scrubby oaks. The quick, sagacious experience of Fordham, at once showed him the advantages which were promised by this discovery.

"Stop, Mr. Arthur;—we must think a little."

"What do you see, Mr. Fordham?"

"The horses! Our horses, and those of the inimy."

"Where?"

"Yonder;—in them scrubby oaks."

"We have them!" cried the youth eagerly, seeing the uses of the discovery at a glance.

"Perhaps!" replied the other. "The first thing is to know if any one watches the horses. We must see to that. We must fetch a compass through the woods, and come in on the back of them. I must give you a lesson in woodcraft. We are to see without being seen. If they see *us*, we lose all that we have gained. A rifle shot from behind a log may tumble both of us, and these rascals won't stop at a shot, if they see us making at them with we'pons in our hands. Let us round this thick, and git across the road above."

The caution necessary, rendered the operation a tedious one; but it was managed with perfect success by the practised woodsman; Arthur Eveleigh following promptly in his track, and

emulating his circumspection. They wound their way under cover to the horses, and found them without any guard—the banditti needed all their forces for the pursuit of the negroes. In silence, and with great deliberation, Fordham proceeded to strip the horses of their saddles, which he concealed in the thicket. To remove the bridles was the next operation.

"What's the use of this, Fordham?" was the whispered query of his young companion.

"To gain time—to make the horses as useless to the inimy as possible. But we will leave two of the nags saddled, and if you will lead these quietly, through the wood ahead, and get them across the creek, where we can find them at a moment, they will help you and your mother to git on. These rogues are all below us, I reckon, and looking out for the wagon. It's cl'ar they're aiming at a great plunder. They'll gut the wagon if we let 'em."

"But, couldn't we mount, and ride the rascals down?" demanded the youth.

"And draw a rifle-shot from every bush as we pass? No! no! Mr. Arthur, that would be to *spile* the whole business. We've got a *leetle* the advantage now, and I'm for keeping it. I'd much rether cut the throats of all the horses than mount them, *now*, when these scamps are scattered through the wood. But let us stir ourselves. Will you take the two horses down to the creek, while I keep watch?"

"Yes; but what will you do with the rest?"

"Turn 'em loose, and let 'em pick about the woods. They'll be so much harder to be caught."

"But why not take them all over the creek?"

"I'm afraid; lest we should be caught, and be attacket *on*awares. It's better so, as I tell you. Ef you don't like the job, Mr. Arthur, say so, and I'll do it while you keep watch here; though I'm rather the better hand, I'm a-thinking, to do the watching part of the business."

"No, Fordham; I'll do it."

"Hurry then, Master Arthur, and be back as soon as possible. With our three rifles, we can make these rascals feel very sore taking them *on*expectedly out of these bushes. I'll not turn the other horses loose till you git back."

The youth had but three hundred yards or so to go, and he executed his duty with sufficient celerity, and with success. He crept back, and into cover, alongside of Fordham, with all the stealth of an experienced woodman. He was on his best performance, and taking his first lesson in war; and proud and solicitous accordingly.

"And now that we are ready for the rascals, I'll jest slip the bridles and let the horses free. Do you lie close, keep behind that log, and see that you havn't spilt your priming."

A few moments sufficed to let the horses loose, and then Fordham crept to a thick clump of bushes, some ten yards from the spot occupied by Arthur, and laid himself at length behind it. The horses, for a while, as if unconscious of their enlargement, stood with heads down in the same place. Soon, however, they began to turn, now to one side and now to the other;—anon they thrust their noses to the earth, and nibbled at the meagre grasses; gradually, they began to wander, and, after a short interval, to scatter themselves about the wood. Meanwhile, the wagon appeared in sight, and our party, lying *perdu*, beheld the rush upon it from the wood, and saw the result, as we have thus far described it.

Their turn was about to come.

"I count the whole five, Mr. Fordham," murmured Arthur crawling nigh to his companion.

"Yes; and they've work to do before they catch Jack Sylvester. He's off. It's him, I know, that walked this side of the wagon; and Captain Porgy's Pomp was jest behind him with his fiddle. With two horses only, the rascals will never catch them all in this world."

"They've gone after them."

"Three of them, I think. No; only the two mounted men. I still see three, near the niggers they've caught. They're tying them. Well—that's strange! I wonder what they can mean? They surely don't intend to steal 'em ag'in, now the British have gone."

And Fordham raised himself uneasily, as if disposed to take the field.

"Lie close, Mr. Fordham—they re coming this way.

"Sure enough: two of them! They're coming after the

horses, I reckon. Well, with *two off*, in chase of the runaways one minding the wagon, and *only* two to manage at a time, I think, Mr. Arthur, we ought to manage 'em. If we can pick off these two skunks, it 'll take more courage than I give the other chaps credit for, to bring 'em down to attack us in *our* ambush. Now, don't be too eager, Mr. Arthur—keep down your heart. Shet your lips close, and spread out quiet on your left side. Don't you cock your we'pon 'till you're ready to let drive. There's always time enough for that. Perhaps you'd better wait 'till I give tongue with *my* rifle, and then yours can follow at the chap that you see still standing."

"Let *me* shoot first, Mr. Fordham, if you please?" murmured the youth eagerly.

"Well! But I'm afraid you'll be too *on*steady;—you talk like it."

"No! no!" answered the other, "you'll see."

"Well! well!" replied the overseer, good naturedly—"young fellows must begin sometime or other! Only, Mr. Arthur, don't waste the bullet when you show where you take your rest. Don't let your heart thump so as to knock your eye out of the range. See to that."

"I will!" in a subdued, yet agitated voice.

No more was said between the parties; the approach of the two brigands requiring their utmost silence and attention. On a sudden they were seen to halt. They had discovered that the horses had escaped from their place of fastening. One of them pointed to a couple of the animals which had wandered some fifty yards from the cover, and were now feeding up through an open pine ridge. They both turned aside in this direction. At this moment they were within long rifle range of the ambush. The course they now pursued was calculated to take them entirely beyond it. Arthur Eveleigh saw this, and, in his eagerness, his unwillingness that they should escape him, and perhaps from a miscalculation of the distance, he pulled trigger upon them.

"Too far--too far!" muttered Fordham—"I was afear'd he'd be too quick on trigger."

"He's got it," cried the youth, almost too loudly for prudence.

"Only a taste—a flesh-wound, Mr. Arthur," said Fordham, who could better appreciate the effects produced by the shot

The man aimed at was certainly hit. He was seen to spin round for a moment like a top, while his right hand caught convulsively the left arm just below the shoulders.

"A little more to the left, Mr. Arthur, and the bullet would have bored him through the heart. Now it's only grazed the arm. He's got a taste, however, that'll operate mightily like a scare. They'll fight shy of us now, and we must watch that they don't fetch a compass round us. Lie close and reload."

Meanwhile the companion of the wounded man hurried to his assistance, and they both retired in the direction of the wagon. Here they were seen to tear off the coat of the sufferer, to examine and to bandage up the wound. The fellow laid himself down, leaning with his head against a tree. The dressing was soon performed, and Arthur Eveleigh was mortified immensely to discover, what was sufficiently apparent, that the hurt, as Fordham had said, was to the flesh only. Not a bone was broken and the blood was quickly stanched. The wounded man was seen to lift his arm without assistance, and, after a few moments of repose, he got up and joined his comrades who had now retired to the woods, as if for consultation.

CHAPTER IV.

LESSONS IN WOODCRAFT.

THE whole aspect of the affair had now undergone a serious change in the eyes of the outlaws. We must enter into their councils for a moment. Close by the side of the road, but concealed amid the shrubbery which skirted it, three of the party had assembled, including the person who had been left in charge of the captured negroes. These, as they had all by this time been well secured with ropes, and were now grouped together at the side of the wagon, needed perhaps no close *surveillance*. Still, the party at the roadside, but a few paces distant, were ready, should there be any movement among the slaves. But they lay quiet crouching close to the earth, and entirely sub-

dried by their terrors. The two absent outlaws were still in pursuit of the fugitive negroes in the woods opposite. The three whom we now find in council consisted of Bostwick, the squatter, Ralph Burke, and Dick Norris—distinct persons all, certainly, but with such a family likeness among them, the result of great beards, mammoth wigs and whiskers, all of glossy black, and similar habits, that they could really only distinguish each other by their voices. Bostwick, as was proper, was the person to open the conference upon the state of their affairs.

"Well, boys, here's a trouble. These chaps have got loose, and how, is the puzzle."

"No puzzle, I reckon," answered Burke. "They've been outied by that wench that you let slip out of the carriage. That's the how."

"I reckon it must be so," answered Bostwick.

"And how you come to let her slip, is a matter I can't see. You *would* take the carriage to yourself, and shet your eyes to hafe [half] the business."

"Yes; whar' was your eyes, Bostwick?" quoth Norris.

"In the widow's pockets, I reckon," muttered Burke, with a shrewd approach to the truth.

"I miss'd it sartain, somehow," replied Bostwick, composedly; "but that's not the matter now. It's *now* to see how we hev to mend the slip. It's sartin sure that Fordham and the young man are loose, and it don't matter by whose hands. I suppose the widow's loose too?"

"There was only one shot, Bostwick," quoth Norris.

"Well, what of that?"

"Well, that would show there was only one man. Now, it's not so cl'ar to me that Fordham's loose. He had quite too hard a hit o' the head to git the use of his eyes and fingers so mighty quick, ay, or his senses either. Now, if it should be only the young un."

"Hardly. He's not got the sense for it yet, though he's spunky, I know—I know him of old. I've seen and talked with him years ago, when he wasn't knee-high. Ef 'twas only him, we could soon sarcumvent him. But it's not so easy work Fordham, who is a sort of man-fox, I tell you; as cun-

ning as a sarpent, and with a mighty hard head and fist in a fight."

"There was but *one* shot!" quoth Norris, pertinaciously.

"Yes, and Fordham wasn't the man to shoot *that*, I'm thinking," said Burke. Ef he's the man you say, he'd ha' held back. *until* he could ha' made a better mark with the bullet. It's the boy, I tell you."

"But suppose the man's along with him?"

"Would Fordham ha' let the chap shoot a minit before the time?"

"I reckon he couldn't help it. The boy was always mighty hard-headed. But whether there's one or two, boys, there's only one way before *us*, and that's to find out, and take the back track upon 'em. So, up with you, Rafe Burke; we're the men for this business! We'll leave you, Norris, to keep an eye on the road and the negroes—seeing as how you're a wounded man; you're an *on*combatant, as they say, and kin only do hospital sarvice."

"Psho! I kin do as much as ever. This here is only a scratch, and a mighty leetle one at that."

"It come mighty nigh to making your cross, old fellow. The same bullet, only a *leetle* to the left, would have worked out a buttonhole in your ribs that no plaster could have shet up again. But, whether you kin do much or leetle, aint a matter now. You kin use your rifle at a push, and that's enough. Keep your eye on the niggers, and if Jeff Brydges and Tony Hines come in afore we git back, keep 'em in till you hear the whistle three times—three short whistles and a long one. You know what that means? Then bring all hands to bear. We'll want you."

"What's your first aim now, Bostwick?"

"To git on the back of these fellows, and see after the widow. Ef we kin git hold of *her* agin, supposing they've cut her loose and hid her, we sh'll be mighty nigh to making what tarms we please with her son and Fordham."

Such was the ruffianly policy of the parties. Bostwick and Ralph Burke now disappeared, pushing deeply into the woods, and carefully giving a wide berth to the precinct still occupied by the carriage, where they now knew the two honest men to

be in ambush. Meanwhile, what of these companions, the overseer and young Arthur?

We must not suppose that Fordham was so inexperienced a woodman as to continue in occupation of the spot which they had distinguished by the discharge of firearms. He knew better the necessity, so admirably practised among all the partisans of this region, of changing the ground the moment they had struck a blow, or in any way given reason to an enemy to think that they occupied it. Scarcely had Norris and Bostwick retreated from before young Arthur's fire, than the overseer said to his inexperienced companion —

"Now, Mister Arthur, this is jest no place for us! We must creep out and off, and shift quarters. Don't you *rise*, for you don't know what spies may be looking out in this direction now. Take your rifle in your right hand, and crawl, as well as you kin, sideways, tell you git to the end of that log, then twist round, and crawl fora'd, in a straight track for the crossing at the creek."

"What's to be done now, Mr. Fordham?"

"Jest now, nothing, but what I tell you! To creep out of quarters in front of which you've cried aloud from the mouth of a rifle, 'here your inimies camp.' You ain't to think that five rapscallions like these, aiming at plunder, will give up the s'arch when they know there's only two ag'inst 'em. They'll be upon us ag'in, and it's my notion now to take up a position jest where they mightn't look to find us."

"Shall we not push down to the swamp where mother's gone?"

"No, no, Mr. Arthur! —there's some birds about your own fields that could teach you better than that. They takes care, when you're birding, to fly jest the farthest from where they hides their family; and they take pretty good care, by crying, and chirruping, and screaming, and dipping about all the time, to make you believe jest the contrary. Leave your mother to herself. I reckon they'll never do her any mischief, more than robbing her of all she has about her. But *we* hain't got the protection of a petticoat, and we mustn't risk anything by having a petticoat in our way. Do you jest follow now, as I show you, never rising up once higher than you do now, tell I give

the word. One never knows when he's quite safe in sich an expedition as this; and the only chance is in jest playing the scout, as ef you had a wolf on one quarter, and a yellow painter [panther] on t'other. Pull up now—it's slow and tiresome walking, this, on all fours, or belly to the ground like a snake; but it's more sure than any other, and won't last very long."

Fordham led the way with a will, crawling forward with a degree of ease and rapidity which was quite surprising to young Arthur, whose practice had never been in this sort of woodcraft. He was for ever arrested by boughs of trees, fragments of the storm; by holes and hillocks; by vines and roots, that, bulging out upon the surface, and concealed by dried leaves, caught foot or hand, or rifle, alternately, and to his perpetual annoyance. He was, a dozen times, on the point of springing to his feet, and braving every danger, but that he was partly subdued by the reflection that his recent precipitation had already brought about mischievous results. Besides, he was watched by Fordham, who ever and anon put in his exhortation judiciously, to "take it coolly," "don't be in a hurry, Master Arthur," "only a *leetle* bit longer," and "it will soon be over." When the patience of the youth was almost exhausted, Fordham uttered the grateful words of relief.

"Now, Master Arthur, we can lift ourselves. We're in a pretty close thick, you see of gall and 'hurrah-bushes,' where it would puzzle the prophet Daniel to look us out. Here, do you lie quiet for a bit, tell I take a view of the field of battle. I'll not be long; and you shall hear me hoot, like an owl, when I'm coming back."

He disappeared almost with the words, affording young Arthur, who was buried on every side in the thicket, no opportunity for a single word. The place in which the latter found himself was a sort of wolf-castle, as, in the southern country, such places are apt to be called. The wild, matted, tangled, tough, and altogether indescribable shrub, which the woodman described as the "hurrah-bush," and for which we have no better name, constitutes, in poor soil, and on the edges of swamps and drowned lands, one of the most formidable and impenetrable of forest-walls; while the gall-bushes, which are apt to associate with it, mass themselves together with a luxuriance of top which

effectually closes every aperture of sight. Beneath them the bear and wolf, of the wilder regions, or the hog and wild-cat in the more civilized, find their way, making the only avenues of egress and entrance; and these of a sort to require the hunter of them to crouch almost to their four-footed levels, with his feet half the time buried from sight in mud-puddles, while his hands labor incessantly in pushing the thick masses of shrubbery from his eyes.

Poor Arthur grew monstrous impatient in this gloomy abode. Fortunately, the season had been dry, and he had no inconveniences to endure beyond those of restraint. But, to a youth of his eager and restless temperament, this restraint was the worst of evils. His horizon was within reach of his grasp. The great trees above shut out the heavens. The wall of shrubbery about him left him no other objects of survey but the one monotonous wilderness of dull, green waste; and it was only by squatting and crouching almost to the earth, that he could pierce to the distance of a few yards along the dark and sinuous beast-paths that ran below—the highways of deer, and bear, of fox, and 'coon, and 'possum.

But Fordham was not long absent. Soon the faint hooting of the owl was heard, and suddenly the youth discovered the overseer within a few paces of him, winding along beneath the bushes like a black snake, seemingly without motion, and certainly without noise. The stealthiness of his approach caused the young man to start. His enemies, approaching with such facility, would have fatally surprised him. He learned a new lesson of woodcraft, and his humility increased with his caution, in the growing conviction that he had a great deal yet to learn.

a fact which fast young persons are very unwilling to believe, and rarely discover for themselves, unless with the penalty of frequent bruises.

"They 're travelling, I'm sure," quoth Fordham, with evident anxiety. "They're not idle, I could take my Bible oath;—but what? That's the question! They make no signs. They're too keen, all of them, and are now winding about in the woods, without turning up a leaf. We shall have to get closer into the swamp, Master Arthur, and put some good-sized pond on the back of us, so that, if they find us, they 'll have to take us in

front. Then we kin manage; only, you must let *me* tell you when to shoot. Ef we throw away another shot, it's next to throwing a scalp along with it, and I'd rather not part with mine; and I'll die hard, Arthur, before I see them finger your'n."

The youth caught the hand of the overseer, and pressed it warmly, but without speaking.

"We must back out of these 'hurrah-bushes,' and git upon the tussocky places, among the pines. Jest now, do you follow me close; I reckon we kin go ahead boldly in this quarter, sence it's *im*possible that these rascallions kin have got quite to these parts. Here, away, and don't be *im*easy."

"But my mother, Fordham!"

"Well, we shall push for one side of the same swamp that you told her to make for. As I told you, I'd a'most rather that she shouldn't be with us; for, though she's a mighty strong-hearted lady, your mother, yet there is no answering for any woman in a sudden bloody skrimmage, with, maybe, sharp shooting, and a wild Ingin-shouting at the same time going on. There's no telling what sort of supper these fellows mean to get ready for us. Stoop a bit, now, Mister Arthur, and keep close to the bushes; we've got to cross a leetle rising ground jest here, before we reach the swamp."

They were moving pretty quickly over this track, when, seeing Arthur a little too erect, the woodman caught his wrist and pulled him down.

"Squat—close—quite now—*es* [as] you are!" said Fordham, in a whisper. "Hist now, don't you hear?"

"Nothing! What is it?"

"There was a whistle, jest there to the right—hist! Again! Don't you hear it?"

Arthur fancied he did hear something like a whistle, but added—

"It's a bird's, Fordham."

"Ay—but a sort of bird that's born without feathers, Arthur! Creep, now—hands and knees—and take care not to jostle a bush—a leetle more this way. We must make for them cypresses, jest ahead; there is, likely, a pond behind them, and we'll put it to the back of us."

All this was said in a whisper. The two moved forward; Arthur exerting all his will in subduing the eager anxieties that diffused a feverish glow over his whole system. He was almost breathless when Fordham paused, on the edge of a small tract of soft ooze, which indicated the terminus of the little rising ground over which they had been crossing.

"Now," said the latter, still in a whisper, "we'll work round this little ooze, and git upon the tussock among them big cypresses. There are, you see, some *bay* bushes jest in front of them, which will do to cover us. We must still crawl, for that whistle is a little nigher than you reckon, and we must use all our caution."

He led the way in the manner he described. Never did fellow, carrying two rifles, exhibit such agility. Arthur could scarce conceive, though he beheld it, how the thing was done. He found his one rifle, though a short one, and his pistols, a sufficient burden, pursuing such a progress, and, half the time, in a crouching, or crawling attitude. But one of the rifles carried by Fordham, was the German yager, short, and with a strap attached, which the overseer contrived to bind pretty close to his body, and beneath it, when he crawled; the stock being just under his left shoulder. His right hand grasped the long rifle, which he held above the ground. The two soon reached the designated tussock, and crouched quietly behind the bay or laurel bushes.

"Now," said Fordham, "let us reprime. I reckon we've spilt the powder from our pans."

He himself lifted the cover of his rifle pan with great deliberation; But the incautious Arthur threw his open without heed, suffering the click to be sufficiently heard.

"Ah! Mister Arthur," whispered the woodman, reproachfully, "that will never do. You've got a mighty deal to l'arn. That click kin be heard jest as far as the whistle of that ere bird. One talks to the other so as he kin *on*derstand. In these swamp woods, so still as they are now, I kin hear the click of a rifle fifty yards, and ef I'm not mightily mistaken, these scamps can hear it too. We'll try 'em! Now—are you primed?"

"I am."

"Jest then give me your cap. Lie close now, and keep ready.

We'll just draw their shot, ef so be they're in rifle distance. You'll see what eyes these fellows have for an inimy, ef so be they've got round, as I'm thinking they hev', to the edges of the swamp."

He elevated the cap upon the rod of his gun, just beside one of the cypresses, showing the cap only, above a bunch of laurel. Scarcely had he done so, when the report of a rifle was heard. The rod was lowered instantly; the cap was untouched—the aim had been six inches below it—and the ripping of the bullet through the bark of the cypress, showed how narrow would have been the escape of a man occupying the same position.

"You see! The cussed skunks!"

"Can't we get a crack at them, Fordham?"

"Ef we could, I'd say take it; but lie close, and keep your fire. I'll riconn'itre."

And the shrewd woodman crept away down the bank-side and disappeared. Arthur soon lost sight of his person among the bushes on the right, and everything remained as still as if the region had never been inhabited.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FAT TURKEY WALKS INTO THE TRAP.

WHILE the youth remained, thus, *perdue*, confused and impatient, but, by this time, fully tutored in the necessity of keeping quiet and watchful where he had been placed, ten minutes might have passed; to him seemingly a good half hour. He was suddenly awakened to increased agitation and anxiety, by hearing a second rifle-shot about twenty paces on his right. He conceived, rightly, that this shot was from the overseer, and eagerly began to anticipate the necessity, himself, of taking part of the action. But a deep silence again followed, and ten minutes more may have elapsed, when he was suddenly conscious of a sound among the bushes as of a stick broken. He turned his eyes in this quarter, gauged it with his rifle, and, though ex-

pecting Fordham, stood prepared to meet an enemy. He was reassured by a chirp, not louder than that of the cricket from a split-log, and the next moment the overseer glided up the bank.

"You shot! What have you done?"

"Nothing much, I reckon! I didn't expect to do much, but mostly to give the skunks an idee that we were in different camps, and that they couldn't git at one fairly, without putting themselves in the way of eating the bullets of the other. I was tempted, as I seed a little motion in a heap of tallow-bushes; and, as I reckoned that was pretty much about the spot where their shot come from, I kept my eye upon it, and when I saw the top of the bush move again, I aimed pretty low down and blazed a way.'

"Well?"

"Nothing come of it, so far as I seed! I reckon I was a *leetle* too quick on the trigger, jest like a younger person, Arthur. But let us slip down this bank, and get farther along up the swamp."

"But when you drew their fire, by the cap, Fordham, why didn't you offer for a rush at them?"

"How was I to know how many rifles they had, with mouths full of bullets still? No! no! Master Arthur;—we are but two, and they are five, may be—certainly four—and ef thar's to be a rush made, why they are the proper persons to take the resk. We must resk nothing. We're on the defensive, *all* the time. What we must aim at is to sarcumvent them. We must fetch another compass, and change ground constantly."

Having, by this time, reloaded his discharged rifle, Fordham led the way for his young companion. Creeping along the hedge of laurel, but not so near it as to disturb a sprig, the two glided down the tussock, and soon made their way into the deeper shelter of the swamp. They now moved steadily upward, aiming, though by a circuitous progress, in the direction of the creek where Fordham was surprised in the opening of the affair. While thus moving, let us look into the camp of the enemy, and pierce their policy, if possible.

We need not detail the several fetches by which the two bandits, Bostwick and Ralph Burke, approached the point where we find them. Their route, like that of the party we have hitherto

accompanied, has been a circuitous one—in recognition of the vital necessity, which existed, that they should not unadvisedly happen upon their foes. A proper knowledge of woodcraft, led Bostwick and Burke readily to conjecture what would be the game practised by Fordham. They aimed, accordingly, to accomplish a circuit so sufficiently wide, as to bring them, finally, in the rear of the overseer, no matter how much the compass he, too, might have allowed himself in the desire to attain a similar object. In this progress, they measurably accomplished their aims; and, but for the retreat to the "Hurrah" and "gall berry bushes," and the short pause of the overseer and Arthur in that place of refuge, they would, probably, have arrived at better opportunies than those which they enjoyed.

It was while fully conscious, from certain discoveries which they had made, that the fugitives were nearly within striking distance, that the two outlaws hid themselves for awhile; keeping a sharp watch, rifle in hand, within twenty paces of each other. Their instincts led them to divine that Fordham would seek the cover of the swamp;—and, upon this region they kept their eyes, from the centre of that elevated ground over which the overseer had so cautiously crept, leading his inexperienced associate. While lurking and watching thus, the eyes of Burke were the first to catch a glimpse of the youth's cap elevated above a clump of laurel. The bait took and he fired; to the great annoyace of Bostwick, who had seen it also, and had suspected the *ruse*. The parties rejoined, a moment after this shot, and, with a brief wrangle in respect to it, separated as before, and once more shrouded themselves among the myrtle and tallow bushes. It was, while recovering this position, that Bostwick drew the fire of Fordham;—suffering a narrow escape, the bullet actually cutting the cape of his coat, and razing the skin of his shoulder as if a cowhide had been laid on with a will. The fellow writhed under the smart, but made no other movement, and, after a brief pause of watch, in the hope that the secret enemy, whose bullet he had escaped, presuming on a more fatal result, would show himself, he readily conjectured, from his forbearance to do so, that he had changed his ground. But he waited still awhile longer; then, as all continued silent, he whistled to Burke, who answered him from his place of shelter

and both drew backward, crawling away in snake-fashion, and scarcely stirring the foliage which had given them shelter.

"We can't play these cards too nicely," said Bostwick to Burke, as they went some yards in the rear of their late position, and with the "hurrah-bushes" effectually concealing them from sight. "This chap, Fordham, is a whole team of foxes, and no mistake! We must git *across* the road, and push down quick for the swamp on that side—cross the creek and road at the same time, and come in on 'em from that quarter."

The plan was agreed on, and at once put in execution. Once in the forest, on the opposite side of the road, the two bandits made rapid progress upward; reaching the margin of the swamp in which, as we have seen, the widow Eveleigh had previously taken shelter, very nearly as soon as Fordham and young Arthur. But a considerable space now lay between the latter and their hunters, destined, however, to be rapidly overcome, as the overseer and his companion were also bending their steps toward the same creek which the bandits are now crossing. Once on the opposite side, the two latter struck into the swamp, proposing to pursue the course of the creek which wound through it, and place themselves in ambush among the willows and laurels by which it was skirted. But they had not gone far, preserving the caution which had hitherto marked their movements, when they discovered such proof of the near neighborhood of other parties, as made them momently forgetful of Fordham. The anxieties of the widow Eveleigh, in respect to her son, had made her unwilling to leave him, while there was any prospect of his suffering from an encounter with his foes. Though she had crossed the creek, and had consented to go forward on her route—keeping still the cover of the wood, under the guidance of Jenny, the servant-maid—yet with a fearful fascination, which she could not withstand, did she again return upon her own footsteps. Her track, going, had been detected in the soft ooze along the margin of the creek. It was followed instantly by the outlaws.

"Let us but git our hand on *her* ag'in," quoth Bostwick, "and we'll git a purchase on her son and Fordham."

Such was the cold-blooded calculation.

"Right!" responded Burke. "Son or mother. the one kin always be made to sell out for the other."

"That's jest as they have vartue and nateral affection. These will do it—but, let me tell you, 'tain't the case with many hundred others. 'Gad! there's some people that'd rether sell mother and grandmother, and son and grandson, then give up the hair of a nigger, or the shine of a dollar. I've known many of that sort—but it's no use to talk. There's man-beasts, Burke—wolf and tiger, fox and skunk, 'coon and 'possum, snake and spider—who don't know no law but jest to strike and swallow—and makes snares and steal, when they can't strike; and run, rether than fight, for their thievings! I don't know, old fellow, but we b'longs to some one of these breeds, ourselves; and we'd be bad enough, ef we wa'n't willing to resk our lives as well as our honesty. There's one I know, but——"

"Who?"

"Never mind—he's one who would cut his inimy's throat with *your* knife or mine, and take his neighbor's money with *our* hands; he's—but no matter. Now, this widow and her son are of the true grit—people of *raal* blood; and *raal blood*, Burke, is a vartue by itself, and by natur'. They'd die for one another!"

"We won't hurt 'em, Bostwick?"

"That's as it happens. We don't know what we may hev' to do. One must help himself, no matters who he hurts! We must use one of 'em to bring the other to reason. So—stop! —hist!"

The two crouched instinctively into cover.

"The turkey's walking straight into trap!" quoth Bostwick.

A whisper between the parties, and they stole off, still under cover, in different directions. A few moments only had elapsed, when Bostwick laid his hand on the unconscious shoulder of the widow Eveleigh, taking her by surprise, while the fingers of Burke griped Jenny, the servant-maid, rather tenderly than otherwise, about the nape on her neck.

"Jest taking a leetle liberty, my lady," said Bostwick, in a gruff and disguised voice.

She started and shuddered, but submitted with dignity; vexed

to the soul, and humbled, that. once free from his clutches, she had not followed the instructions of her son and the overseer, and pushed rapidly from the scene of danger. She felt, in an instant, all the advantage that her second captivity would afford to the enemy. Jenny, the servant-maid, was overwhelmed with her terrors, and screamed, and continued to scream, until the enraged Burke, throwing her to the ground, crammed her distended jaws with moss enough to make an infant's mattress.

"I must take the liberty, ma'am, of giving your arms a hitch as I did before, but, this time, you must walk with me. I sha'n't leave you a second time out of sight."

"What is your design upon me, sir? Speak out! If it is money—you are already in possession of all I have about me, —If you require more for my ransom, and that of my friend, say so, and if it can be procured, I will consent to any sum, sooner than submit to this treatment!"

"Directly, ma'am;—that's for afterward. But, jest now, you must foot it along with me. Quick, ma'am, I've got no time to waste."

"But whither must we go?"

"Back to your carriage! I reckon we'll put you in it, right away, and send you home safe enough, after a leetle while.—That's ef you ain't obstropolus."

"Who are you?"

"A wolf, ma'am, or a tiger, ef you axes after my family and name. Come, ma'am, walk, or by —— I'll lace you with a hickory. I will, by thunder!"

This was plain language enough. The widow bestowed but a single glance of her large blue eye upon the ruffian, calm and strong, under the threat and indignity; then quietly moved forward in the direction which she was bidden to take. What was only a threat in the case of the widow, became an experience in that of the servant-maid. Gagged and on the ground, she resolutely refused to rise, till the enraged Burke, cutting a rod from a neighboring bush, laid it thrice over her shoulders. The argument proved sufficient, and she set forward with a speed that was studiously calculated to leave a space of five feet or more between herself and assailant; who still continued to threaten with the rod which he found no longer necessary to use in any

other way. Again the party sped across the creek, and into the opposite forest, making rapid progress, and keeping vigilant eye upon the road which separated them from those woods, in the unknown retreats of which Fordham and young Arthur continued to find shelter, and where it was very well known they lurked and watched. Let us now return to them.

CHAPTER XVI.

SKIRMISHING.

The overseer and his young companion, having struck somewhat deeper into the swamp, were necessarily compelled to make a considerable circuit in approaching the point where the outlaws had succeeded in recapturing Mrs. Eveleigh. The swamp, of irregular figure, thrust out a huge horn between the parties, the extent of which Fordham had not calculated. This was always pretty full of water, and not passable, except with great difficulty and inconvenience. The two were on one side of this horn, or arm of the swamp, itself a lake—while the outlaws skirted the other—the creek being between the parties also—when the screams of the servant-maid of the widow smote sharply on the ears of our wanderers. The first instincts of Arthur led him naturally to suppose that the cries were from his mother.

"My poor mother!" he exclaimed, passionately. "They have found her, Fordham. Hear! It is she! These are her screams. They are ill-treating her."

"I don't think!" returned the other, with interest, but still calmly. "Don't be scared, Arthur. I reckon they've found your mother, and have made her a prisoner agin, though she ought, by this time, to have been a mile farther on the road. But 'tain't *her* that you hear a-screaming. It's Jenny, the gal, I reckon. Mrs. Eveleigh ain't the lady to scream, I'm thinking. It ain't *like* her."

"But are we to stand here, Fordham, when there's no knowing what these villains are after?"

"That we must try and see, Arthur. We must push on, that's sartain; but we mus'n't push on any faster than we've been doing. The only way to save her, and to save ourselves, is jest to play scout tell we kin git some advantage. Jest you leave the thing to me, and ef so be we're to work out of this trouble with whole bones, it's only by showing not a white of the eye to these skunks, until we kin speak to 'em safely by the mouth of the rifle. Let's push on, along the edge of this lagoon, as we're a-doing. It'll bring us out upon the road after awhile, and we'll see. Now that these rascals have got your mother, as I reckon, they'll not be able to work their way through the woods so easy as afore."

The youth felt that everything must be left to Fordham, in whose ingenuity and courage, as well as fidelity, he had full confidence, and the two pushed forward, still with great caution, worming their way along the edge of the swamp, Fordham taking the lead with equal energy and circumspection. They reached, in this way, the road, just where the creek crossed it, and there Fordham halted.

"Now," said he, "Arthur, do you keep close here in this cover while I take an observation of the country. I'll be gone only a leetle while."

He was gone somewhat longer than he himself had anticipated, and young Eveleigh was getting quite impatient, when the overseer suddenly reappeared. His countenance was grave and anxious.

"Well, Mr. Fordham! my mother?" demanded Arthur.

"Them's mighty sharp rascals, Mister Arthur," replied the overseer. "They've got back to the carriage, and they've put your mother and the gal into it. But there's no scaring the scamps. They've put your mother on the seat of the driver, and they've tied her to it, and the gal's tied inside. Besides, they've carried off the two horses."

The youth gnashed his teeth.

"You've seen her then—my mother?"

"Yes! she's put so that we *could* see her,—the d——d varmints! By that I know'd they're on the watch for us. They think that when we've seed her, and not them, we'll be such

blind buzzards as to show ourselves. But I see the trap as well as the cheese. We'll not take the bait, Arthur."

"How do you know she's tied?"

"I reckon so from the way she sits, though I didn't go nigh enough to see. I calculate that these scamps are lying on both sides of the carriage, close in the bush, with their eyes running close along their rifle-barrels. They know we're between them and the creek. Now, as that's the case, our first business is to work round on t'other side. We must take another fetch through the woods."

"Let's be moving, then," said the youth, impatiently.

And the overseer struck out at right angles, as if wholly leaving the road. He pursued this course for a while, with a comparatively swift motion, and, after compassing a couple of hundred yards which brought them once more upon the swamp, he turned suddenly to the left, and took a route parallel with the road, which he followed with little variation for about thrice the distance. Then, making another turn to the left, he made his way forward, seeking a point near the highway, but at some distance in the rear of the carriage. When he caught sight of these objects, which taught him to believe he had gone sufficiently far, he restrained his youthful companion. They both crouched, and went forward, steadily keeping under cover of the shrubs, bushes, and long grass which covered this region. After a brief space consumed in this way, during which they had drawn nigher to the carriage, Fordham paused and whispered to Arthur.

"Now you lie down snug. Ef I calculate rightly, these skunks are now within reach of a long-tongued rifle. I reckon that one lies on t'other side of the road among them oak-bushes, and in that tall dry grass. The other is, I'm thinking, on this side of the road, somewhere among them water-myrtle and willow bushes. Do you see your mother in the front seat of the carriage?"

"Yes!"

"Well, I reckon ef she could speak, she could tell us jest where these critters harbor. They're on a sharp lookout for us now from above. But we're *here*, Arthur, and its always half the battle when your inimy don't know where to look for

you, and when you can reasonably p'int your finger and say, 'Thar *he* is!' Look back, Arthur, and see ef there's anybody in the shape of a white man nigh the wagon."

"I see the negroes only, and only half of them, I reckon."

"Well, ef I could only tell how many of these chaps was here in front of us; but whether one or a dozen, there's no help for it now but patience. Keep you quiet now, while I do a little *making*."

And, so speaking, the woodman crept forward, close to the ground, frequently pausing to listen, and sometimes raising himself, whenever a sufficiently dense cover enabled him to do so with safety. In this way he continued to advance, until a space of thirty or forty yards alone remained between himself and the carriage. He was still pursuing this serpent-like progress, when Arthur suddenly heard his mother's voice, the tones eager, and full of anxiety and agitation.

"Beware Arthur—beware Fordham! You are seen! Your enemies watch you!"

Fordham was down in an instant, but Arthur, excited by his mother's voice, on the same instant, raised himself to his knees, rifle in hand, and eyes that seemed to have acquired all the far penetrating and piercing power of the eagle. Almost in the same instant a shot rang through the woods, which whistled through the bush beneath which Fordham crouched, rending the leaves and twigs immediately above his head.

"Blast you!" cried Ralph Burke, who had fired, addressing himself, in the same moment, to the widow, "ef I hear another word out of your head, I'll cut your tongue out!"

He had scarcely spoken from his bush—for he also was buried among the leaves—when the bush was seen to be hurriedly agitated, and the widow heard another shot, but from what quarter she could not conjecture. It was her son that fired.

At her words, which had called him up from his crouching attitude, he had caught a glimpse of the flash which had preceded the shot of Burke, and obeying his impulse, he had drawn trigger at the same moment upon the spot from whence it issued. He knew not if any effect had ensued from his fire, for a deep silence overspread the scene; and he began bitterly to reproach himself with the precipitance with which he had again emptied

his rifle without first making sure of his object. But, had he then known the truth, he might have congratulated himself in the language of Hamlet—"praised be rashness for it"—that he had obeyed his impulse without regard to the seeming impolicy of the proceeding.

"Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,
When our deep plots do pall;"

and so it was in the present instance. The almost random bullet of the youth had buried itself in the brain of the ruffian, and, with a single fearful spasm, he lay dead beneath the cover which had lately formed his ambush.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CONFEDERATES CHANGE THEIR GAME AND WOULD CLAW OFF.

From the deep silence which covered the region, one might suppose that all the parties had suddenly disappeared. Mrs. Eveleigh had been warned to silence by the brutal threat of the ruffian, Burke; and having, as she thought, sufficiently informed her son and his companion of the proximity of enemies, she was not unwilling to respect the warning. She knew not of the effect produced by her son's shot. The fact that it was fatal, was unknown, indeed, to any of the parties. Fordham had been suddenly made more than ever cautious by his narrow escape from Burke's bullet, and lay in supreme quiet in the bushes which sheltered him. Young Arthur had also sunk back into cover, quite ashamed of his own (assumed) rashness and indiscretion, and congratulating himself that he had not drawn the enemy's fire also.

Bostwick, in the meanwhile, conscious of the fact which Fordham had no reason to suspect, that the parties were now equally matched, and that all his hope lay in the excellence of his own stratagem, crouched more closely than ever in his place of ambuscade, with every sense quickened by the feeling that he had

an enemy before him who, thus far, had shown himself a match for him in Indian artifice. In the practice of woodcraft he was now willing to acknowledge that Fordham was quite as good a man as himself. Of that which had been exercised by the opponents respectively, we have been able to report but imperfectly. It would need more space than we can afford to chronicle minutely those details, of which we have given an outline only. The fox-like doublings, the snake-like crawlings, the subtlety, stealth, keen sight, and foresight, equally, which had been shown by both sides, in their several approaches to, and recedings from each other, had been of the best school of stratagem, as practised by the red-men of America. The little practice of our *dramatis personæ* will, on a small scale, exhibit the characteristic features of Indian warfare, which, first of all, recognises the necessity of risking nothing, and of making a clear gain, without equivalent loss of all its advantages. Where the number is so small on both sides, the first necessity is to economize it. Art is to supersede brute valor. No perils are to be incurred except in cases of extreme necessity, and when the issue of main force is absolutely inevitable.

In the present instance, Bostwick and Fordham were equally impressed with the necessity of avoiding loss. Neither dared show himself, with the view to an assault, or any bold demonstration, as long as an enemy lay concealed and on the watch, with a rifle-barrel still unemptied. Thus, accordingly, after the space of ten or fifteen minutes after the several shots of Burke and Arthur had been delivered, neither of the parties had moved or spoken.

The first sounds which struck the ears of Fordham and Arthur were the faint whistles of a partridge. The latter, in his inexperience, really supposed them to proceed from the bird; but Fordham knew better. He now held his breath, if possible to distinguish from what precise quarter the sound had issued. He knew it to be a signal. It was repeated at slight intervals, and he found that it came from the opposite woods—the carriage being, in fact, directly between himself and the sound. He supposed it to be forty or fifty yards distant. Thrice did he hear it, and always from the same precinct. He could perceive no answer to it. Either, therefore, his late assailant was nigher

to him than he had imagined, and therefore dared not answer, or he had succeeded in drawing himself off from the scene of action. He never once fancied anything so agreeable, but so little probable, as that the hasty shot of Arthur had done his business. But the conjecture of Bostwick led him more nearly to the truth. The failure of Burke to answer his signal—for it was his—filled him with doubt and apprehensions. He repeated it thrice, as had been agreed upon between them, and listened vainly for the reply. He at once reviewed all his ground, and, for the first time, began to lose his confidence in the enterprise.

"I'm jaboos," he muttered to himself, "that Burke has got his fodder! There's but one way for it, and that's to back out. It's high time. Better half a loaf than no bread. Six niggers sure, is better than a dozen, with a ragged bullet to chaw into the bargain. I must shift the ground—git back to the wagon, bring the boys together, and take what we've got."

These results were slowly arrived at. Once resolved upon, the execution was immediate. Bostwick, with habitual cunning and caution, withdrew from his place of hiding, drawing back into the deeper woods, and without provoking any suspicion of his movement. The widow, from her seat in the front of the carriage, and who without actually seeing the squatter in his place of ambush, was yet aware of the spot in which he harbored, was totally ignorant of his departure. Once in the deep thicket behind, Bostwick rose to his feet, and sped down the road with all possible haste, in the direction of the wagon. There, also in concealment, he found his colleague, Norris, who, having heard the firing, had become exceedingly uneasy.

"Well—haw goes it, Bost?" he inquired, as the other drew to his side. "Where's Burke?"

"Not in heaven, I reckon! Maybe in a worse place, if the preachers know anything about it."

"What? You don't mean—?"

"I reckon he's chawed his bullet. He don't answer the call. That d——d eternal Fordham! They've had a shot apiece, and the widow cried out, and Burke, like a bloody fool, must git out of the bush, and curse her, and shake his fist at her, and so draw'd the inimy's fire. Sence then, he's laid quiet, and don't answer to the call."

"But you ain't sure? You hain't seed for sartain?"

"No! He may be only barked a leetle; but there's no telling. I durs'nt ventur', as Fordham still keeps close!"

"And what's to be done?"

"Claw off—that's the how! Take what we've got sure, and be off. The boys not in?"

"Yes; they're after the horses. They caught another of the niggers, and we've tied him with the rest."

"Makes seven?"

"Yes."

"We must be satisfied with that, and be off. It's been a mighty hard business, and I'm getting tired, and scary too. We'll be having somebody upon us, ef we stay much longer. Better mount, and drive the niggers we've got, and make for Dooley's Cove. We ought to be there before moonrise."

"But don't you think we kin git something out of the wagon? A jug or two of rum, I'm thinking, and *pre*haps some other little fixings that we kin carry on the saddle?"

"Well, I suppose we might make a s'arch; but you mustn't be long about it. I reckon the boys hev' got the horses by this time. There's been nobody to hender, this time. Where did they go to?"

"Yonder, in the open piney wood, where there's grass, I'm thinking. It's thar' the boys went. Hesh—thar' they come, bringing all the critters. What shall we do about Burke?"

"Do! What should we do? Mind what the Scripter tells us—'Let the dead bury the dead.'"

"But we don't know that he's dead."

"And we mus'n't resk the life of a live man to find out. Ef he's living, I reckon he knows what to do. We'll make a divarsion in his favor, and he kin then snake away to the swamp. Ef he's dead, there's an eend to his troubles, and we kin take care of his horse among us, and spend his share of the money! Ain't that sense, I ax you?"

"Right! But about the divarsion?"

"Well, look you—these chaps—this overseer Fordham—d—n his quarters, I say!—he and the young chap he about the carriage now, a'most within pistol-shot. I'll put myself in the thicket thar'"—(pointing to a spot some fifty yards farther on

the road, one third of the distance, perhaps, between the wagon and the carriage)—"and jest cover the track with my rifle, while you s'arch the wagon. Let Brydges and Tony Hines lead off the niggers. Have our horses ready to follow. Tell 'em to take the woods down for a mile or so, then strike into the old road for the burnt church; we can push a'ter them at a smart gallop, and overtake 'em any time. Anything more?"

"No! go ahead, and put yourself on the watch, and I'll make the s'arch. We must pick up some litte vallyables, if we kin."

"How's your arm?"

"Feels a little numbish, but don't hurt. It's only a skin transaction!"

"Now, don't be long about the wagon s'arch; and don't stop to try the liquor. That's your danger, Dick, you know."

"Paho! a taste kin do no man any mischief."

"But your taste is never less than a swallow, and a swallow, like what you takes, damages mightily the sight-seeing for a rifle. Be quick, now, in what you do, for the sun's lowering fast, and we've been too long a'ready about the business."

"Be off, Bost, and keep a sharp look out. I'll take care of what I'm after."

Thus the parties separated. A few moments sufficed to put Bostwick in his new place of ambush, covering all approaches from the direction of the carriage; and to set Norris at work in exploring the contents of the wagon. The two confederates, meanwhile, came up with the horses, which now, with one exception, had all been safely recovered. The negroes were then roped together as they were, set in motion, and slowly disappeared from the road; driven before the two outlaws on horseback. The movement did not escape the keen eyes of Fordham; and he groaned, in the bitterness of his spirit, as he beheld, first a box, then a sack, then a keg, pitched out from the wagon, as from invisible hands within the vehicle.

"Thar's the sugar," he muttered; "thar's the coffee; thar's the kag of rum! The varmints! Lord, ef I could only git a sight of the chap that's so active—it's not quite two hundred yards I reckon—I'd try what vartue's in a good rifle at longer shot than I like to use it in common shooting. But, Lord! what can be done?"

The soliloquy reached no ears but his own. He did not yet dare to speak aloud, or to show any sign of life. The very silence that prevailed around him, led him still to apprehend that his enemies were near him, and still on the watch; while Mrs. Eveleigh, still bound, and still in sight, preserved the quiet of one who was conscious that she had hostile listeners.

The overseer readily conjectured the game which the ruffians were prepared to play. He saw the negroes marched off by *two* of the outlaws. There were yet three as he conjectured, with whom he had to contend. Two of them were still, he supposed, in the precincts of the carriage; and the fifth man was in the wagon. To move against *him*, or to attempt to pursue the *two*, with the negroes, would be to expose himself and companion to the fire of the two whom he assumed to be on the watch for him. He was thus completely masked, and felt himself bewildered. To draw off from this dangerous neighborhood was his best policy, yet he dreaded the attempt under the *surveillance* (as he supposed) of his two enemies. We must add, in justice to our overseer, that his chief anxieties were on account of young Arthur. The devoted fellow never once forgot how precious in the mother's eyes was the safety of her only son. To remain quiet still longer, and wait the further development of the schemes of the highwaymen, was the conclusion to which the meditation of Ferdham conducted him. To lie close, keep dark, and wait events, is, perhaps, the best policy, always, in any such contest, where we do not see clearly the prospect or propriety of action. He did not adopt this policy in vain. Hardly had he come to this resolution, when the scene was changed by the introduction of other parties. For these, however, we must open another chapter.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE LAST DROP OF JAMAICA IN THE VETERAN'S BOTTLE.

The reader will, perhaps, find it advisable to go back with us to a certain small group of Marion's partisans, whom we left, *en route*, from the camp of that chieftain, for the ancient settlements upon the Ashepoo, which they had abandoned at the opening of the Revolutionary struggle, to undergo the capricious events of war. Captain Porgy, and his little suite of three persons, having been making easy progress since we left them—have advanced considerably on their way homeward, and are now almost within striking distance of the Ashepoo. A few miles beyond it, and the captain will once more be able to contemplate his ancient homestead—the paternal house and hearth, the well-known fields and woods—a once valuable property which had been transmitted to him through three or more careful generations—he, alas! being the only careless one of the race—in whose hands their continued accumulations had constantly undergone diminution, until now, when, what with his own profligacy and the misfortunes naturally following the sort of war through which the colony had just gone, his homestead was almost wholly desolate, stripped of negroes, and covered with debt as with a winter garment.

Porgy had been a *fast youth*. He had never been taught the pains of acquisition. Left to himself—his own dangerous keeping—when a mere boy, he had too soon and fatally learned the pleasures of dissipation. The war found him pursued by debt and embarrassments, as unrelaxing as the furies that hunted the steps of Orestes.—He had found temporary relief from the hands of usury, and may thus be described as falling from the grasp of the Furies, into the worse keeping of the Fates. He held himself very nearly a ruined man, when the war began; and war, [illegible] loss of numerous negroes, carried off by the enemy, gave I ne[illegible] reason to doubt upon the subject. His lands were mort-

The land, the negroes gone, his debts cried aloud against him for judgment, and he had reason to know that his chief creditor was on the watch for his return. The cessation of war, which stripped him of his occupation, was an event which necessarily restored the common law to its fearful activity. The camp was now doomed to pale in the shadow of the court; arms must give way to the gown; and the laurels of war soon wither, in sight and from remembrance, when the tongue only is allowed to carry on the contests of human antagonism. The *grillars* in war, are notoriously the *caterpillars* in peace, and there was no blessed exemption, in the lot of Captain Porgy, from this distressing prospect. Of that he was well assured. He did not once deceive himself. He could, with sheer force of will, expel from his presence the gloomy prospect, but he had no imagination such as would enable him to look on it, till he made it grateful and encouraging.

To the strongest — nay, to the most reckless nature — there will be always something humbling and oppressive in the survey of such a situation. The questions "what is to be done?" — "whither am I to turn?" — "of what am I capable?" — "where is my resource?" — to be asked of himself, for the first time, and by the man who has already passed middle age, are well calculated to fling a pall over the prospect, and make the heart to shrink at the entrance upon the unknown void of life which yet spreads before it. Porgy was the man to feel, thoroughly, the discouraging and sad, in this survey; for he was a man really of good sense and many sensibilities; — but he had moral resources which kept him from basely cowering and whining beneath the cloud. He was only not so blind as not to see it with oppressive distinctness — to feel its pressure, to acknowledge the doubts and embarrassments which crowd upon his path; — not to shudder at them basely, or to yield to any weaknesses of mood, in consequence. Besides, he had a taste for pleasure, was not a little of an epicure — there may have been, indeed, some affectation in this characteristic — and he prided himself upon the fact that he could extract his morals always from his appetites. He took philosophy with him to his table, and grew wise over his wine. So, at least, he claimed to do.

We have seen him, in a previous chapter, resorting to this

of remedy against the cares which he was yet compelled to contemplate—appealing to his appetites against his griefs, and seeking consolations against thought, in his last bottle of Jamaica. It so happens that in resuming our acquaintance with his party, we find him again similarly engaged. It is noonday and past. Our partisans feel the necessity of stopping for refreshment, on the route.

They have reached a pleasant spot upon the roadside, a rill of sweet water trickling across the sandy highway from a green copse that shelters it—and there are still a few bright drops in the corpulent bottle of Jamaica—one of a shape and size that we do not often see in use in these degenerate days. It was, in shape, an oblong square, with portly capacities, holding, perhaps, a trifle under a gallon. A netting of wire-

[illegible] envelops it, affording it comparative safety against the

[illegible]les of travel.—The party have tasted of the beverage

[illegible]me upon them. The bottle leans against a tree just

[illegible] streamlet. Tom, the cook, has been again made to

[illegible]v unstrap his wares, and prepare his hoe-cake and

[illegible] he feast has, already, in a great measure, been en-

[illegible]he only persons who still show an unrelaxing appetite,

sergeant, Millhouse, the one-armed veteran, and Tom,

[illegible]ican. You may see that each of these carries in his hand

fragments of bread, and broiled ham of corresponding

[illegible]ions, the latter *done to a turn*. The sergeant eats as if

conscious of Tom's excellence as a cook, and—for no other

[illegible]son. He is not silent when the expression of his gratitude

becoming.

"Tom," says he, "I shall never be able to eat bo'iled ham of

ny other cook but you! You knows what a bo'ile ought to be,

om, and what hog-meat naturally deserves."

"I ought for know, Mass Millhouse! Mausa show me how for cook 'em here'e. Mass Porgy fus'-rate cook! He 'tan' [stand] ober me when I fus' begin for l'arn. May-be he [illegible]'ing to when I sp'ile 'em! Sometime I do 'em too. Eh you no got do 'em too little; he cuss bote times, if drop de seed." make me see h—l of I do 'em so nex' hand jest as well as two! want for see h—l, and I min' [mi' must think me a sort of child, I nebber forgit. Mausa bble me!"

"Mass Porgy is [illegible]

"Let anybody stand [illegible]

through him, by thunder!"

—"I trot t'rough arter you, M[illegible]

like the debbil!—Sometimes he sick! But, wha' den? I always hab good share of wha' I cook. Ef Massa only hab skin ob de pig, he sure for gib me de yaps [ears] and tail."

"He's a d——d good fellow, Tom—Cappin Porgy. I'd 'a been a dead dog ef 'twa'n't for him. But he seems mighty dull, these times, Tom;—droopy, I may say; like a young turkey in wet weather."

Tom looked with interest toward his master, who was sitting some steps off—reclining, rather than sitting—beneath a tree, with young Lance Frumpton, the ensign, in attendance. In the low tones of voice employed by the sergeant and the negro, in this conference, they were quite unheard by the subject of their dialogue.

"I sh' nn [see 'em]," responded the negro. "De brute in Mass Millh'us—de bakin is most gone; de bottle, I 'spec' [expect] hab room 'nough for fill agen;—I most 'fear'd der's no quite 'nough lef' in 'em, to gib you and me another dram; and de army's broke up, de British and torys, day say, all gone; and nobody lef' for we ravage 'pon, and git new supplies. Dat's it! Wha' we for do now, is de t'ing. It's dat wha', make Mass Porgy look like young tukkey in rainy wedder."

"Tom, old boy, we'll have to work for the cappin."

"You work, Mass Millh'us!—wha' you kin do when you only got one han'?"

"But I'm got a h—l of a big heart for my friend, Tom, by thunder; and when there's heart enough in a man's bosom, Tom, he kin always find arms enough to serve his friend, even if so be both hands are chopped off."

"Der's truth in dat, Mass Millh'us," answered the negro gravely with an assured shake of the head.

"Truth! By thunder, Tom, it's all truth! It's the body and soul of truth, and I'm the man to prove it! I'll wrastle! The cappin shan't want! He can't do much, Tom, for himself, so please—there's to be no more fighting, which is the only work indeed, suttle—attend—in de, without e'iling his fingers."

himself upon the fa—pleman for true."

from his appetites. He—p and say he ain't, and I'll gallop and grew wise over his wine.

We have seen him, in a previous Millh'us."

"But he don't need that. He'd the man to do all his own fighting, and mighty glad of the chance."

"Fight like de debbil, Mass Millh'us! You take some more of dis br'ile?"

"No, Tom, no more;—and yet, you do br'ile it so bloody fine that—yes! You may fork over that bit. The small bit, Tom, keep t'other piece for yourself."

"I done! Ef der' was only de smallest drop o' dat Jimaica in de bottle!"

The fellow looked wistfully toward his master. The eye of Sergeant Millhouse took the same direction, but neither of them would have dreamed of doing, or saying, anything, which might declare their wants to their superiors. But it was in proof of Captain Porgy's claim to the character they had both been pleased to assign him, that of the gentleman, that he always duly considered the claims of the inferior, and anticipated their reasonable desires. As if divining their wishes, he seemed to awaken up at this moment, and cried out from his tree, to Millhouse:—

"Sergeant, there's still a drop of the Jamaica for you in the bottle. Give what you leave to Tom. There's, perhaps, a tolerable sup for you both; but it's the last. I suppose, whenever we deserve it, the good Fortune will send us more."

Millhouse did not wait for a second invitation. Tom smacked his lips as the sergeant approached him with the bottle.

"Wha' I bin say, Mass Millh'us? Ef Mass Cappin had only de skin ob de pig, he will gib we de tail and yays."

"He's a born gentleman, by thunder; and we'll work for him, Tom, more hard than any nigger he ever had."

"I 'tan [stand] up wid you for dat, Mass Millh'us. I cook myse'f 'fore I guine le' Maussa want for dinner. So long as dere's 'coon and 'possum, squerril and rabbit in de wood, pattridge and dub [dove]—duck in de ribber, and fish in de pond—so long, I tell you, Tom will always hab 'nough somet'ing to cook! As for de corn, we kin make dat too. Ef you no got two han' for hoe, Mass Sergeant, you kin drop de seed."

"But I kin hoe like h—l, with one hand jest as well as two! Why not? By thunder, Tom, you must think me a sort of child, old fellow, of you think I kaain't!"

"Well, Mass Sergeant, I know you hab de strengt', but it don't come so easy to de one-hand man. You hab de strengt'. You will help me pack up de pots and kettles, when we ready for start, Mass Sergeant?"

"Why not, nigger? To be sure! It's for your massa, Tom, and I love him, boy, and I'll be his nigger, too, when it ain't *on*decend—that's to say, when there's no company. *If* a great colonel or gineral should come to visit the coppin—Colonel Singleton, maybe, or the 'Old Fox' himself, maybe, or Ginneral Greene, or any other big person—why then, Tom, don't say work to me them times! I must be in my rigimentals when they comes, and stand jist behind the coppin."

"Da's right? I comperhend, Mass Millh'us! Every nigger to he own sawt o' bizness. But, hallo! Wha' dis I see. Der's strange pusson, Mass Millh'us, coming out de bush! Wha' for dat? Man da run! Nigger da run! He holla! Ha! look da' Mass Millh'us. Two nigger da' run. Enty I know 'em? Stop! Le' me see. Sure as a gun, Mass Millh'us, one ob dem boys is our Pomp. I lef' 'em a boy! He's grow a man! Wha' Pomp! Da' you? Ha! ha! ha!—ho! ho! ho! Lord ha' mussy [mercy] 'pon my eyes! Dey blin' wid water!"

We must account for these broken apostrophes hereafter. We owe it to Captain Porgy and *his* companion, to bestow our attentions upon them also, and see what have been their meditations while at dinner.

CHAPTER XIX.

PHILOSOPHY IN THE BEGGAR'S WALLET.

THE moment we choose for reintroducing Captain Porgy, and his late lieutenant to our readers, is one which is usually found to fulfil all the conditions of happiness to the ordinary mortal. They have dined. Crouched at ease, under the shadows of an enormous oak, they have feasted upon the simple fare provided by the hands of their excellent cook, and have done the amplest justice to the thin slices of broiled ham, "done to a turn," and the brown hoe-cake, in the proper composition of which, Tom had established in camp the most enviable reputation. These constituted the sum total of their commissariat. The sufficient potations of oily old Jamaica had followed; and with a sense of physical satisfaction which greatly brightened the prospect, Captain Porgy leaned back against the shaft of the tree, and closed his eyes in order justly to enjoy it.

That complacent sort of revery which usually occupies every mind, after the noon-day appetite has been subdued and satisfied, had already seized upon our corpulent captain. Under its present influences, the state of his affairs began to look less gloomy. The circumstances which more particularly pressed upon his thoughts at this juncture—the loss of his late employment, the involvement of his estates, the supposed abduction of all his negroes, the danger which threatened at the hands of certain creditors—sharks, in shoals, lying in wait, like tigers of the land, seeking what they may devour—these crowding and dismal figures upon his landscape which, before he dined, had rendered his thoughts a very jungle, worse than Indian, of lions, tigers, and snakes of mammoth dimensions—with the consummation of the noon-day meal, retreated from before his path, disarmed of most of their terrors, and, though still lurking and still hostile, looking so little capable of doing mischief, that our captain began to wonder at his own feebleness of soul which had, but a little while before, so greatly alarmed him on their account.

A mild and soothing languor of mood, as if by magic, changed and modified all the figures in his landscape: and Nature, having gained time—which is the best capital, after all, as well in morals as in war—it was surprising how grateful and agreeable became the philosophy which she had taught our captain. He actually—to the amusement of Lance Frampton, who had tried in vain to soothe his melancholy mood as they rode together before dinner—began to chuckle aloud, yet unconsciously, during his revery, and finally afforded to his young lieutenant an opportunity to twit him, good humoredly, upon his sudden change of humor, by snapping his fingers in the air, as if at the flight of some enemy, whom he had successfully combated.

"Well, I say, captain, you don't seem quite so sick of life as you said you were before dinner. I reckon you won't be shooting yourself, as you threatened, only a little while ago."

"Well, boy, what then? Is life less loathsome because one learns to laugh at it as well as hate it?"

"But you don't hate it, captain—not now."

"No, and for a good reason—because I no longer fear it. I see the worst of it. I see all that it can do, and all that it can deny, and I feel, let it do its worst, that I'm the man for it."

"And what's made you so much stronger now to bear, captain, than you were only an hour agone?" asked the youth, with an insinuating chuckle.

"Dinner, you dog, I suppose—dinner and drink. Is that what you mean? Well—I grant you. We are creatures of two lives, two principles, neither of which have perfect play at any time in the case of a man not absolutely a fanatic or a brute. The animal restrains the moral man, the moral man checks the animal. There are moments when one obtains the ascendency over the other, and our moods acknowledge this ascendency. Before dinner, my animal man was vexed and wolfish. It rendered me savage and sour. I could not think justly. I could not properly weigh and determine upon the value of the facts in my own condition. I exaggerated all the ills of fortune, all the evils before me, my poverty, my incapacity, and the ferocious greed of my creditors. My soul was at the mercy of my stomach. But, the wolf pacified, my mind acquired freedom. The wild beast sank back into his jungle

and the man once more walked erect, having no fear. Philosophy, my boy, appears once more to comfort me, and the landscape grows bright and beautiful before my evening sun."

"Well, all's right then, captain, until you get hungry again."

"Poh, poh! boy — sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. God will provide. Vex me not with what to-morrow may bring forth, or refuse to bring forth. To-day is secure. That is enough; and the philosophy which to-day has brought, will, no doubt, reconcile me to-morrow. Hear you, Lance? It is the first policy in a time of difficulty or danger, always to know the worst — never to hide the truth from yourself — never to persuade yourself that the evil is unreal, and that things are better than they really are. When you know the worst, you know exactly what is to be done, and what is to be endured. In time of war, with the enemy before you and around you, you are required to see his whole strength, give him full credit for what he can do, and ought to do, and determine, accordingly, whether it be your policy to fight, or fly, or submit — whether you can fly — what will be your treatment if you yield, and what is the reasonable chance of safety or victory, if you resolve to fight. In time of peace the necessity is the same. Peace is only a name for civil war. Life itself is civil war; and our enemies are more or less strong and numerous, according to circumstances. One of the greatest misfortunes of men, and it has been mine until this hour, consists in the great reluctance of the mind to contemplate and review, calmly, the difficulties which surround us — to look our dangers in the face, see how they lie, where they threaten, and how we may contend against them. We are all quite too apt to refuse to look at our troubles, and prefer that they should leap on us at a bound, rather than disquiet ourselves, in advance of the conflict, by contemplating the dangers with which we think it impossible to contend. I have just succeeded in overcoming this reluctance. I have arrayed before my mind's eye all my annoyances, and the consequence is that I snap my fingers at them. An old Jerry Sanford used to cry out when he was in a fight, 'Hurra for nothing!' Jerry was a true philosopher. His motto shall be mine. Hurra for nothing seems to me to embody the full amount of most men's matter for rejoicing."

"Well now, captain, it's a fine philosophy, I reckon, that'll bring a man to such a sort of feeling. But, if I may take the liberty, I'd just like to know, how such a philosophy can put a stop to the trouble, make the enemy quit the field, drive the creditors off the plantation, and fill the corn-crib when it's empty? I ask these questions with your permission, captain, seeing as how you've been good enough to talk to me upon your affairs, and your debts, and the troubles from the sheriff that you're so much afraid of."

"Afraid of the sheriff, boy! Who dares to say that of me? Never was I afraid of a sheriff in my life. D—n him! Let him come. I have the heart, or I'm no white man, to take the whole *posse comitatus* by the snout."

"*Posse comitatus!* Oh, I reckon you mean the deputies?"

"Ay, ay—the host of deputies—a legion of deputies if you will, from the Pedee to the Savannah. But you haven't caught my ideas, Lance. I must try and be more intelligible."

"I thank you, captain."

"You know, Lance, as well as anybody else, that I've been a d——d fool in my time."

"Yes, captain, to be sure."

Porgy's self-esteem was not pleased with so ready a concession.

"Well, boy, I don't mean exactly that. How the devil do you know anything of my folly?"

"Oh, I can guess, sir."

"Can you, indeed?" with a sardonic grin. "You are too knowing by half, sir—presuming to know, for one so young as yourself. I mean, boy, that I've done a d——d sight too many foolish things. This don't make a man utterly a fool."

"No, captain."

"Unless he continues to do foolish things, mark you."

"Yes, captain, I see."

"Most men, the wisest, do foolish things. I don't know, indeed, but that wisdom itself requires to go through a certain probation of folly, in order to acquire the degree of knowledge, which shall teach what folly is—what shape it takes, and how it will affect us. I suppose that it was in obedience to this law of nature, that my follies were performed. But my error was that

I continued my probation quite too long. I was ambitious, you see, of the highest sort of wisdom. I made too many experiments in folly, and found them too pleasant to abandon them in season. The consequence was, that I began to grow wise only as I forfeited the means for further experiment. My wisdom had its birth in my poverty, and as it was through my follies that I became poor, I suppose, logically, I am bound to say that I was wise because I had been so great a fool. Do you comprehend me?"

"A little, captain; I think I see."

"You will understand me better as I go on. I wasted money—a great deal—ran into debt—sold negroes—mortgaged others—and when I joined the brigade, my plantation was mortgaged also—I can't tell you for how much. But, even if the British and tories had not stolen all the rest of my negroes, the sale of the whole of them would scarcely have paid the debt then, and there's some six years' interest since. A very interesting condition of affairs, you will admit, for my contemplation now."

"Very, sir."

"Now, to look fully these affairs in the face requires no small degree of courage. I confess, until I had finished dinner to-day, I was scarcely the man for it. But that last draught of that blessed and blessing old Jamaica—did Millhouse and Tom get a good sup of it?"

"Pretty good, captain."

"They require good measure, both! Well Lance, boy, that last sup of the Jamaica seemed to warm up my courage, and I resolutely called up the whole case, didn't suppress any of the facts, looked at all the debts, difficulties, duns, and dangers, and said to myself, 'A fig for 'em all.' Let the lands go, and the negroes go, and still—I'm a man!—a man!"

"That's the way, captain," responded the youth, with enthusiasm, seizing the extended hand of his superior, and pressing it with a real affection.

"It was just when I had come to this conclusion, Lance, that I snapt my fingers. I couldn't help it. It was the spontaneous sign of my exultation; and as I did so, I thought I saw the d——d mealy face, blear eyes, hook nose, and utterly rascally

while, of my creditor M'Kewn, back out from before me, and take to the woods at a full run. Along with him went the sheriff and the whole swarm of deputies, all of whom have been dodging about me the whole morning, shaking their d——d writs, ca. sa's, fi. fa's, and a thousand other offensive sheets of penal parchment in my face. I discomfited the wretches by that same snap of the fingers; and the adoption of old Jerry Sanford's cry of battle—'Hurrah for nothing!' has made me able to back poverty and the sheriff into the woods!"

"I'm so glad, captain!"—after a pause, was the response of Lance Frampton; but, with some hesitation, and perhaps not well knowing how to shape the question which he only desired to intimate—"but, captain, is that all? Will it end so?"

"End how?"

"Won't the sheriff come again?"

"What then! Give him another snap of the fingers, and the war-cry."

"But won't he take—"

"The property? Yes! I suppose after a while I shall have to surrender; but we'll make a d——d long fight of it, Lance; and we'll get terms, good conditions, when we give in—go off with our sidearms, flag flying, and music playing the grand march 'Hurrah for nothing!'"

"But, captain," continued the youth, "I don't altogether know. You're a man of learning, and can tell much better than me; but I'm rather dubious. When I was a boy, old Humphries of Dorchester, father of our Bill, you know, he sent the sheriff after my father, and took him, and took all the property besides, even to the very beds and bedding. Now, won't they take you, captain, if you can't pay?"

"Take me, boy! Do I look like a man in danger from the claws of a sheriff? No, no! There will be blows in that business. They know better, Lance. In fact they are content, dealing with a gentleman and a soldier, to take his baggage-wagons, his *impedimenta*, and that purely out of kindness, as they desire to free him from all incumbrances. They will hardly attempt more. That d——d harpy, M'Kewn, will be quite content, I suspect, to take the plantation. There are no negroes left, I fear."

"But Tom?"

"Tom! oh, ay! And you think Tom liable?"

"Ain't he, then?"

"Well, I suppose so. Tom is certainly a negro. Tom is certainly mine. As mine, Tom is liable for my debts, and it *may* be that some d——d fool of a creditor or sheriff may fancy that he can take Tom. But he shall have a hint in season of the danger of any such experiments upon my philosophy. I love Tom. Tom is virtually a free man. It's true, being a debtor, I can not confer freedom upon him. But let a sheriff touch him, and I'll put a bullet through his diaphragm. I will, by Jupiter! If I don't do that, Lance—if there's no escape for Tom—for they may seize him when I'm napping—after dinner, perhaps—then, I shall kill Tom, Lance; I'll shoot *him*—him, Tom—in order to save him. The poor fellow has faithfully served a gentleman. He shall never fall into the hands of a scamp. I'll sacrifice him as a burnt-offering for my sins and his own. Tom, I'm thinking, would rather die my slave, than live a thousand years under another owner."

"He *does* love you, captain.

"And I love him. The old rascal, I do love him. He makes the finest stew of any cook in Carolina. He shall cook for me as long as I'm able to eat; and when I'm not, we shall both be willing to die together."

"Well, but captain, you was saying—"

"Ah! yes. We are supposing that all's gone, lands, negroes, baggage—all the *impedimenta*. Everything but Tom—and what then? That is the point which I have reached, and to which my philosophy reconciles me. It is still possible for me to live."

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"How the devil should you know? To be sure, I could live precisely as you and a thousand others would live; but you see, Lance, life is a very different thing to different persons. One man lives like a dog, a hog, a skunk, a 'coon, or even a cabbage. With such a person, you can despoil him of nothing by any process. You can not rob him. Thieves can not break into his premises and steal. Take all he has, and he loses nothing. He can still find grubbage—water lies conveniently before him in

every puddle—and he may swallow air without even vexing the fears of a chameleon. He acknowledges only the principle of distension, not of taste or even appetite, and there is no stint of grass and weeds for a starving heifer. 'Root pig or die,' is with him the whole body of law; and his snout has long since been practised in finding its way into the potato-hills after the crop has been withdrawn. But to reconcile a man, with my training, to such a life, requires a rare philosophy indeed. How, with such tastes as mine, am I to live?—how dig?—where find potatoes, and with what substitutes for tea, and coffee, and Jamaica, refresh the inner man? That I should be able to cry 'Hurrah for nothing!' with perfect good-humor, after such a survey of my case, is the glorious triumph that I have this day achieved. Would you believe it, Lance, that I go out of the war with a paltry eleven guineas in my pocket? And this is all I really own in the world; but—"

"Captain!"

"Well!"

"I've got a *leetle* more than that. Here's twenty guineas that Colonel Singleton gave me more than a month ago. If you're willing, we'll put yours and mine in the same bag, and you shall have the keeping of it."

"You're a good boy, Lance, and I love you; but d——n your guineas. What should make you think that I want 'em? What should make you think so meanly of me as to suppose that I would rob you of your little stock in trade?"

"But it's no robbery, captain—I'm glad to—"

"Pooh, pooh! Put up your guineas, Lance. You'll want 'em all. Don't I know you? Are you not going to marry that pretty little witch, Ellen Griffin?"

"Well, sir—I reckon. Yes, sir, Ellen and me—"

"Give her the bag to keep! Don't trust yourself with it, or, in some fit of folly, you'll be for giving it to some other person, who will take you at your word. You will want all that, and even more, to begin your career in this world. As for me, I see exactly what I am to do, and will tell you."

"I'll thank you, sir."

"There was, many years ago, an old Frenchman, that came into our neighborhood. He was the most dwarfish and

dried-up little fellow in the world. He was as poor as Job's turkey—"

"Why was Job's turkey so poor, captain?"

"I suppose that, being a favorite with Job himself, his wife never fed it. But don't interrupt me by asking such a d——d unnecessary question, Lance! As I was saying of this Frenchman, he was wretchedly poor, in purse as in body, owned no goods that I could see except the clothes on his back, and a miserable little single-barrel bird-gun, small in bore, but something taller than its owner. The only luxury that the old fellow indulged in was snuff; and with this, his upper lip, his shirt-bosom, coat-sleeve, and vest pocket, were all dyed deeply with a never-fading saffron brown. His snuff, gun, a supply of powder and shot, and an old box with some mean cooking apparatus, were his only possessions. I doubt if he had an extra pair of breeches. He alighted suddenly in the neighborhood, and presented himself before me, with a polite bow, and a most persuasive grin.

"'Monsieur Porgy, I yer of you! You s'all let me live on your plantation! Dere is one house ob log by de *leetle* swamp! Dere s'all be nobody live in him! 'Spose you s'all soffre me, I s'all live in him! I have no money to pay! I live by my leetle gun! I s'all shoot your fittle—de deve, de—what you call him, patridge, de squirrel, de rabbit, all de leetle beast. I no frobble de deer, and de big bird—de torkey! You s'all soffre me dat leetle house, and to hill, for my leetle dener, dese leetle bird, and de leetle beasts, I s'all be votre tres homble servant two t'ousand times, and s'all t'ank, t'ree, seven, eight, fiv' times ovair!'

"I consented to the very moderate entreaty; but offered that he should live with me—offered him money—but he refused everything but the simple privileges which he applied for, 'to liv' in de leetle pole house, by de leetle swamp, and kill de leetle birds and beasts.' There, accordingly, this poor fellow lived, for seven years, literally on nothing. He would accept no gifts, and even strove to put me under obligations. If, for example, he shot a pair of fine English ducks, which was sometimes the case, he would bring them to me with a grateful grin—

"'Monsieur Porgy, you s'll do me de ver' great honneur.'

"At first I accepted, but when he steadily refused my help, I refused his game, except as a purchase. His wants were few and easily provided. His powder and shot, his snuff and coffee, salt and sugar, oil and vinegar,—these he procured from a pedlar who went the rounds of the parish at stated periods. To procure these articles, he sold at the cross-roads, or to neighboring families, his surplus game. He planted a couple of acres of corn and peas, just about his habitation, which, under his cultivation, yielded twice or thrice as much as any two of my best acres. His food, besides, was wholly procured by his gun, yet he was not a surprising shot. But he was indiscriminate in his slaughter of 'de *leetle* birds.' He showed few preferences. If the dove and partridge did not come immediately in his way, he shot down woodpecker and blue-jay. The hawk was not rejected from his cook-pot. He luxuriated in 'coon and 'possum when he could get them, and with this object, he frequently went on the night-hunts with the negroes. His taste required that his birds and beasts should be utterly stale before he ate them. His larder was hung with birds, of all sorts, almost dropping to pieces, before he thought them well flavored enough for his palate. Then, with a little salt, oil, and red pepper, he made his meal with the relish of one who has eaten of a princely feast. He was always cheerful as a lark. He sang and even danced alone beneath his trees. He had been on the place for about a year, when he went off suddenly, on foot, to Charleston. When he returned, he brought back with him an old violin, the most looking thing in the world, but stuffed to the core with the sweetest music, which the old fellow brought out with singular skill. The instrument was a genuine Cremona—a famous fine one—which, as I found out afterward, he had left in pawn in the city. His happiness was quite complete when he had redeemed it. I often strolled out to hear him play. He had no apparent griefs. He never complained—never even fretted—was always ready with a grin of good humor—smile he could not, on account of the peculiarly ill-formed mouth which he owned;—and so, for seven years, he lived, entirely companionless. Yet he had visiters, and of his own countrymen. At Christmas, he sometimes had no less than three or four guests, who came again at the close of spring. Without bedding or

covering, except the scantiest for himself, they remained with him more than a week on each occasion. I was curious to see how he would entertain them, and always paid him a visit when I heard of their arrival. He received them with open arms. They were welcome to all he had. True, he had nothing; but what then? He made room for them, gave place by the fireside, spread a third of his room with pine straw, ground an extra quantity of corn and coffee; then, as they had finished their morning meal, he would say — 'All now, my friends — we s'all go shoot de leetle birds!' Each had brought his gun, and they knew that each was expected to find his own dinner; and he did so. I have encountered them on their return from a morning's excursion, and their bags were full — and such an assortment! They killed everything that crossed their paths, taking care, however, to spare the 'big birds and beasts.' My Frenchman, Louis Du Bourg, scrupulously respected his pledges. But, in fact, they all lacked the enterprise which required long and remote wanderings. Their largest visitors, of the bird kind, were the duck; the squirrel and the rabbit were the 'small deer' which satisfied their ambition in respect to large four-footed game.

"Now, Lance, what I have told you is a history. Poor old Louis Du Bourg is dead: but he has left me his example! I see exactly how I may live, as happily and as independently as he — that is, when all's over, and I have seen the worst. I shall then turn to killing 'de leetle bird and de leetle beast,' squatting on some great man's property. I can surely get this privilege from some of my old associates; and, with two acres of tolerable land, I shall hoe and hill my own corn; sow and dig my own potatoes; cook my own hominy; sell my ducks and birds when I want powder and shot, and be able, possibly, as I was once something of a hunter, to carry enough venison to market to procure me an occasional demijohn of good Jamaica. Perhaps, in process of time — but I need look no farther. Enough, Lance, my boy, that, like my old Frenchman, I shall be able, once or twice a year, to entertain my old friends. You shall come and see me, Lance, you and our friend here, Sargeant Millhouse; he shall help me set my snares, and you will help me kill my 'leetle birds and beasts,' and with a 'coon and 'possum hunt, by

night, we shall lay in sufficient store of venison for a week's entertainment of any friends. There, boy, is a prospect for you; and, after surveying it, I can sing out heartily, and with a philosophy that is quite consoling — Hurrah for nothing! Let the world slide!—Sessa.'"

"Oh! captain," cried the youth, seizing affectionately the hand of his superior, "you sha'n't work — you sha'n't hill and hoe corn and potatoes, while I've the hands to do it for you! I'll come and live with you, and work for you—"

"You forget, Lance, you are soon to have a wife."

"True—to be sure," answered the other, staggered for a moment; but quickly recovering, he cried—"Then, captain, you must come and live with me. Ellen will be glad, and—"

"You're a good fellow, Lance, my lad, and I love you, though I don't think that I shall ever be able to become *your* guest. 'Twouldn't suit, Lance. It would be all right that you should live with me, and I must insist upon that, boy, until you are fairly married. For me, at the worst, old Louis Du Bourg's plan is the only one. It will have a look of independence, at least, and that is always a matter of great value to a person of my temper. But, hey! what's the outcry from Tom, and who are these? Help heave me up, Lance, and see to your weapons. It looks like a surprise!"

By dint of great exertions on his own part, and with the strenuous help of his lieutenant, the huge bulk of Captain Porgy was lifted into the perpendicular, and, in a moment, Lance and himself were prepared to make battle as if an enemy were upon them. The cause of the alarm was soon explained; and Tom, the cook, accompanied by Sergeant Millhouse, rapidly approached at the command of Porgy, bringing with them two of the escaping fugitives from the wagon of Mrs. Eveleigh; namely, John, otherwise Sylvester, the slave of the widow and Pompey, junior, belonging to Captain Porgy himself.

CHAPTER XX.

TO HORSE! THE CAMP IN MOTION.

"HERE'S a smash-and-tear-it circumstance, Captain Porgy, as ever you did see," quoth Sergeant Millhouse, advancing before the fugitives.

"Dat's John Sylvester, Mass Porgy, b'long to widow Ebleigh, and dis"—thrusting his hand familiarly into the wool of Pompey, and pulling him forward—"dis da' our own little Pomp, you know."

"Little! The fellow's as tall as you are. Why, Pomp! is that you, boy? Where have you been? What are you doing here? They told me you were carried off by the British."

"I git 'way, maussa! Dey tief me, but I git 'way! How you bin, Mass Cappin? God A'mighty! I so glad for see you;" and the fellow ran forward and shook his master's hand with the eagerness with which one welcomes the best friend in the world.—"Oh! maussa, it's de blessed ting you is come. You hab sword and gun. You mus' mek' haste now. De tory got we—got Ben and Bill and Josey, Little Peter, and all of we, and Toby, and Jupe, and Sam, an' all of dem b'long to Miss Ebleigh: and he hab catch Miss Ebleigh, shese'f, and his son, Mass Art'ur, and de obe'shar, Mr. Fordham, and de wagon, and little Peter, and all—only Mr. John Sylbester, yer, and me, Pomp, show 'em legs, and git 'way."

"What the d——l does the fellow jabber about? What's the rigmarole?"

"It's a surprise, cappin, and no mistake," put in Sergeant Millhouse, "a smash-and-tear-it business! as I said before. You see, the tories, so they call 'em, half a dozen or more, in mighty strange clothes and looks—"

"He face and head all bury in hair and whisper, maussa, da's true," interposed John Sylvester.

"Yes—you see?"

"Well!"

"Have laid an ambuscade for this lady, her son, overseer, wagon, and negroes, and these two chaps have slipped out of the scrape."

"Eh! What's this?" demanded Porgy, at once beginning to perceive that the affair possessed some essentials of importance "Do you mean to say that this ambush has been set to-day—that these things have only now taken place? How long—fellow—you—what's your name?"

This was said to John Sylvester.

"What! Mass Porgy, you no 'member me, John Sylvester, who' b'long to widow Eblaigh? I sure I 'member you fas' 'nough."

"No matter! To be sure I remember you, John, and your great grandmother, too, if you desire it, but we need say nothing of either now. Whose is your mistress, John?"

"In de wood, Mass Cappin—on de road guine home to de plantation, jes' down by de leetle creek wha' run out of Turkey swamp. Dere we meet dem men in de hair and whiskers. He shoot—I fear'd he kill Mass Arthur and de obe'seer [overseer]—he catch misses—dan he jump out 'pon we people wid de wagon, and I reckon he catch we all, only we two, me and Pomp, get off in de woods. Dey push arter us, but we lef' 'em in little green bay, and run, I 'spose must be most four miles, 'fore we see smoke. We creep up, and Pomp say—'De's massa Tom, me fellow sarbant! I know 'em, like me own fadder!'"

"Yes, da me!" quoth Tom, interposing to confirm the report.

"And this *but now*, and only four miles off! and here you d——d pair of long collards, you've taken a good hour to tell it. Boot and saddle, Lance! Millhouse, to horse! Tom, gather up and follow as fast as you can. John Sylvester—up behind Lieutenant Frampton. You, Pomp, jump up behind Sergeant Millhouse, and show the way between you. Ride apart, Lance, *you* and Millhouse, and see to your priming. Let these fellows tell when we are within three hundred yards from the spot where *the affair took* place. Give the whistle then, and haul up and *move with caution*. Don't dismount—we may have to dash in

upon the rascals headlong. I'll take the woods between you — let there be some twenty yards between us each. And now, at a smart gallop, as soon as you can!"

It required but a few minutes to prepare the party in order for the match, as required. John jumped up behind Frampton, Pomp took his place in the rear of Millhouse, and Captain Porgy, setting these two horsemen in the proper direction, dashed forward through the piney woods with a spirit and celerity that seemed scarcely consistent with his great bulk, and the languor which he had exhibited but a little while before.

CHAPTER XXI.

SCAMPER AND SCUFFLE; FLIGHT AND FIGHT.

The negro guides did their duty with the exactness and promptitude of persons who knew exactly what was required of them, and what was the object of the arrangement. They stopped the rapid motion of the horsemen when within three or four hundred yards of the spot where they conjectured the wagon had been left, and with that happy instinct which marks the faculty of the southern woodsman, they uttered their several warnings nearly at the same moment. The horsemen drew up carefully, the negroes, John and Pomp, leaped down, and kept along on foot with the horses, which were now held at a walk; and, in this way, they approached the opening of the road, within eighty yards of the place where the wagon stood.

Here, Porgy was enabled to get a practical glance of the state of affairs. They arrived at a fortunate moment. The negroes, who had been captured, roped together in pairs, were marching off under the charge of two of the ruffians, who were both mounted, and were still to be seen moving slowly away into the pine forests in the distance. Four other horses were discovered fastened to the swinging branches of a tree some ten or fifteen steps from the wagon. The wagon-horses were hidden in the woods. The vehicle itself, however, presented a singular appearance of

vitality. The cover had been thrown off, and lay upon the ground on one side of it. On the other were to be seen bales, bags, boxes, and barrels; and, every now and then, something was seen to upheave itself within the wagon, to revolve slowly over the sides, and come down upon the ground with a heavy squelch.

Were the robbers all in the wagon, the two excepted who were to be seen going off with the negroes? That was Porgy's first question, which he soon answered, as he saw that the contents of the wagon were thrown out slowly, and separately, giving evidence of the presence of a single worker only. Where were the other three? In ambush somewhere—but where? A moment's reflection led our troopers, in a brief conference, to the conclusion that they were somewhere in front, between the wagon and carriage; and not in the rear, or on the route which they were pursuing.—The carriage was to be seen, and Lance Frampton fancied that he could distinguish the garments of a woman in it. Porgy surveyed the field with a military eye. A dead silence prevailed, broken only by the dull, heavy sound of the falling packages from the wagon.

"There is some bush-whacking going on still," said he—"some hiding and seeking, but it's not hereabouts. The fellow in the wagon works coolly and composedly, as if he had no apprehensions. If there had been any suspicion of danger from our side of the woods, the ambush would have been so placed as to have kept us from working so far forward. Our first duty is clear: we must pursue these fellows who are marching away, cut them off, and rescue the negroes. This will compel the ambush to show itself. We may draw their bullets, as we appear; but if we are sudden, with a shout, and go forward at full speed, we are very apt to escape the taste of lead. We can ride these rascals down! They are but two. Lance, you will keep back, and, with John and Pomp, contrive to capture the fellow in the wagon. Don't kill him if you can help it. We must get his despatches, and cut the secret of this expedition from under his tongue. Do you hear?"

"Every word, captain."

"Very good; now, if you will dismount, fasten your nag in the bushes, and creep forward with John and Pomp toward the

wagon, you will probably have a good chance, the moment after we make our rush. The rascal will then jump and make for the bushes, or for the horses. In either case, you ought to be able to grapple him. See to it, and let the boys understand you."

The negroes were soon instructed, and betrayed a patriotic eagerness to be up and doing. Seeing that Frampton had fastened his horse, and was already advanced upon his way, with his sable allies, in the direction of the wagon, Porgy gave the signal, and, with a terrible shout from the throat of Millhouse, the two dashed headlong out of the wood in pursuit of the robbers who had charge of the fugitive negroes.

At this sound, as Porgy had anticipated, the outlaw, Norris, who had been at the work of unloading the wagon, naturally popped up his head to see what was the matter. The vigilant eye of Frampton saw it. He could have shot the fellow even in the single instant of opportunity which was thus afforded him; but he remembered his instructions, and forbore; wisely, it seemed, for Norris, seeing the charge of two well-mounted horsemen upon his companions, and recognising them as new-comers, whose reinforcement to the two customers whom they had already found so troublesome, might well lead to doubts of his own safety, concluded to see to this matter, without any regard to the spoils contained in the wagon. Seizing his rifle, accordingly, he leaped out of the vehicle, but with singular ill-fortune. His feet alighted upon a hamper of Irish potatoes, part of the contents of the wagon, which rolled away beneath him, and laid him at length with his face to the ground.

Before he could recover himself, Lance Frampton was upon him. The rifle of the outlaw was wrested from his grasp; and, with the vigorous young lieutenant grasping him firmly by the throat, John Sylvester by the legs, and Pompey, junior, literally sitting astraddle upon his back, Dick Norris resigned himself to his fate, after a few spasmodic but ineffectual struggles! The whole affair consumed but a few minutes, and was concluded by Lance Frampton securing his prisoner within the wagon by the strongest cordage, scientifically knotted; while John Sylvester, pistol in hand, was seated at his head, instructed to quiet him with a bullet, should he prove troublesome. Frampton, mean-

while, with Pomp, stole away to the bushes opposite, prepared to afford succor to his friends whenever there should be need and opportunity.

Meanwhile, Bostwick, the squatter, lying snug in his place of watch, contemplating his enemy only in the direction of the carriage, was confounded by the sudden appearance of the horsemen in his rear. With their shout and charge, he became almost instantly aware of the assault upon, and the capivity of Norris; for though the struggle had taken place on the opposite side of the vehicle, of which he had but a very imperfect view from the spot where he crouched, he could yet see enough to assure him of such an inequality of force between the parties as must be fatal to his colleagues. He was too heedful of himself to incur any unnecessary perils in the effort to succor his companion; and, indeed, could not well have done so, at least at that distance and with his rifle, as it was impossible so to distinguish any of the writhing figures upon the ground, as to be sure that he should not draw his bead upon his friend, rather than his foe. Besides, he well knew, that to show himself, in any demonstration upon the new enemies in the rear, he must only become exposed to the shot of those whom he felt to be somewhere harboring, and on the watch, in front.

To crawl backward—to increase the distance between himself and *all* these parties, his own as well as the rest—became now the selfish policy of the squatter. He could do nothing to help his comrades—the negroes would be recovered—two of his associates were slain already—he himself was in danger, unless he moved promptly away; and besides, he was already in possession of the most valuable of the *portable* spoils—the strong-box of the widow, having the important papers, as virtually important to the rich M'Kown as to the squatter, Bostwick—to say nothing of the fifty guineas in money, which, he had the widow's word for it, was in the strong-box also; and of which he had already determined to betray nothing to his comrades. It required no great argument to persuade him to be content with his acquisitions, and to draw off in season, no matter what fate should befall his companions. He crawled back, accordingly, slowly and with admirable circumspection; and so changed his ground as to place himself out of immediate reach

of e... of the several groups into which his assailants were divided.

But one anxiety alone prevented him from utterly taking his departure. He would, unhesitatingly, have gone, were he sure that his comrades were *all* slain, or certain to be slain, *without speaking*. But the doubt occurred to him.

"Norris is taken! Should he confess? Should others be taken and confess? That's the trouble. That's the danger and the resk."

This reflection disquieted him. He lingered in sight of the field of action, fully assured that he ought to fly, yet with that incertitude of mood which left him incapable of determination.

"If they confess," said he to himself, "there's nothing for me but to cut and run. The country would be too hot for me!"

Why should he not leave it? is the question that might occur to anybody else. But the wretch was not without his ties, his affections, his sensibilities, such as they were — and when he thought of the necessity of leaving the country, a picture of three young children — one tall, sad-eyed girl among them — grew vividly up before his eyes. He had a wife, too, but he saw nothing of her. It was the three children alone that formed the spell, so potent, about the heart of the bad and seemingly heartless man. Strange that such a creature should so feel and think at such a moment! Yet not strange either.

Let us follow our partisans. The wild halloo of their onset soon made their presence and purpose apparent to the persons they pursued. Looking about them quickly, one cried to the other:—

"Jimini! They're Marion's men, as I'm a sinner! Here's a fix! Cast the niggers loose, Jeff, and use a bloody spur of you knows how. We must scatter."

"How many do you see, Tony?" cried the other.

"Only two as yit; but they rush as of there was a dozen. They've got the heels of us too, I reckon! There's no racing with such a nag as this. I'm for the swamp, Jeff! I can't trust the run, I must try the dodge! And you better do the same, but make your push for the hammock lower down. We must scatter!"

Wheeling to the right, as he spoke these words, one of the

outlaws made off for the denser woods which conduc[illegible] the heart of the swamp, and was soon lost to the sight of his companion in the thick undergrowth of that region. The other, whether less apprehensive of danger, or more confident of his horse, which was young and of tolerable swiftness, seemed to hesitate. He bade the negroes run ahead, and hide themselves; then, once more looking over his shoulder, he felt the necessity of going off at all speed, and did so with the best impulse of whip and rowel. Porgy and Sergeant Millhouse were soon up with the negroes, who cheered them with hearty shouts as they drew nigh.

"De maussa!" was the cry of his own people, almost with one voice. "Hurrah, maussa! Gorrah Mighty bress you! How you do?"

"Young, boys, young and lively! God bless you! How many of these tory rascals are there?"

"Only two ob them, maussa; one push right ahead t'rough de woods—t'udder one gone keen for de swamp. Push hard, maussa, you sure for catch 'em. He hoss no better dan cow for run."

"Don't mind the fellow in the swamp, sergeant! We can look for him as we return. Go back, boys, to the wagon, and help Lieutenant Frampton to put the things into it again, or you will lose all your chance for coffee and molasses. Now, sergeant, as you are left-handed, take the right of this robber, while I take the left. His nag will be a good one, if we do not overhaul him between us in the next three hundred yards."

No more words! They were off, separated by an interval of fifty yards, perhaps, and coursing through the pine woods at a tearing gallop. A few minutes hard riding gave them a fresh glimpse of the fugitive. He was making up for lost time, and going through the undergrowth, and among the thick-set trees, which began to approach each other more and more closely, at a rate, which, to those who have never beheld a fox chase in the south, would seem sheer desperation. The fellow was a good rider, however, and an experienced hunter, born in the bush, and of kindred to the fox himself!

"He goes well, but it can't last!" muttered Porgy, as he applied his *persuaders* anew to the flanks of his own high-spirited

courser. It was wonderful to see how well the animal sped with such a bulk upon his back! But the steed was a powerful one, chosen heedfully with reference to the severe duty which he was required to perform. The fugitive looked about him as he fled.—The partisan captain could already count his gains. The space was reduced between them. The outlaw soon made this discovery. He extricated one of his pistols from the holster, and knit his teeth firmly together, with the air of a man who already anticipates the worst. Porgy was too good a soldier not to calculate on a certain degree of danger, in such an enterprise as that which he had in hand;—but, as he was apt to phrase it himself—

"Danger is a part of the contract! It is to be counted on, but not considered! He who stops to consider the danger never goes into battle! No wise man, embarking in such an amusement as war, ever considers its mischances as likely to occur in his own case. He knows the fatal sisters have singled out certain favorites for Valhalla, but he always takes for granted that they have overlooked *himself!* He relies, always, on his peculiar personal star, and goes into battle—not to be killed, but to kill!"

With such reflections, our Captain Porgy, corpulent as he is, was very apt to behave in battle, as we are told the Berserkirs, or wild warriors of the Scandinavians, were wont to behave. To dash, with a sort of frenzy, into the worst of dangers, totally heedless of them all, as if bearing a charmed life—and only seeking to destroy! And such a practice, by the way, is very apt to carry with it its own securities. A rage that blinds the champion to all dangers, and makes him totally unconscious of all fears, is very apt to inspire fear in the enemy who beholds his approach. The onset of Porgy was well calculated to prompt such feelings. A mountain in a passion, and in progress—a human avalanche descending upon the plain—crashing, rending, overwhelming, as it goes—such, in some small degree, was the image presented to the mind of the trembling enemy, seeing the headlong rush of our plethoric captain!

Our outlaw was soon enabled to distinguish his chief pursuer. He knew his man as he approached—knew his character—his fierce, headlong valor, the power of his arm, the fleetness of his

steed. His mind became oppressed heavily, with the sense of whelming danger, as he saw the space lessening momently between them. He now saw his other assailant, Sergeant Millhouse, who, less rapidly, but quite as certainly, was making toward him on the right. He felt very sure that the game was up with him unless some interposition of good fortune—call it, if you will, his gallows destiny—should baffle the pistols, or the swords, of his pursuers. The outlaw had no remarkable properties of mind or courage;—he was only one of the myriad of ordinary men, who, as we are told by the dramatic poet, issue from one common mould; nature, after their being cast, ashamed of her own handy-work, and sending them forth into the world without putting any mark upon them! But he was a drilled and practised ruffian; had served for years as a soldier; as a robber; as a pirate;—and, from habit, and induration, was a man with whom the exigency only brought out the coolness, the determination and resource. He did not show his pistol, but he cocked it! He saw the course which Porgy rode, and he slightly inclined his horse to the right, in order that he should use his pistol-hand more freely. Porgy suspected his object and made a corresponding change in his own course. He was now sufficiently nigh to the robber to make himself heard. He accordingly cried out:—

"Halt, you d——d outlaw, and surrender, or I'll cut you down in your tracks!"

The fellow, slightly glancing over his left shoulder, "grinned horribly a ghastly smile," but made no answer. The captain was near enough, by this time, to fancy that he heard the click of the pistol lock; but it was fancy only. The outlaw had cocked it several seconds before. The latter glanced uneasily at Sergeant Millhouse, who was now approaching him on the right; and felt the necessity of crippling one of his enemies at once. By this time, Porgy was preparing himself also; but his slightest motion seemed to become apparent to the fugitive. Sharply applying both rowels to his horse's flanks, the great sabre of the partisan captain was drawn in an instant, and the flash of it, as it suddenly waved in air, gleamed unpleasantly in the eyes of the man it threatened. He kept his coolness, however, and his course; and, as Porgy came on with a speed sud

gently accelerated, and while he was measuring the distance which he should first overcome before rising in his stirrups to execute the fatal stroke, the outlaw pulled trigger under his left arm.

The steed of Porgy swayed round at the flash, threw out his fore-feet wildly, then settled heavily down upon the earth, in the immediate agonies of death! Porgy, however, had sufficient warning that the animal was hit, and, releasing his feet from the stirrups as the beast was falling, he escaped from being crushed beneath his weight. He recovered his legs with some effort, but without injury. The horse of the outlaw kept on: but there had been a pause in his progress, which, however brief, had enabled Sergeant Millhouse to get almost within striking distance. But he was on the *right* of the outlaw, who, ignorant of the left-handed, and single-handed, condition of the remaining pursuer, fancied that some change in their relations was necessary to enable the other to use his sword. But he really saw no sword, and his object was simply to escape the pistol. But, against this, Millhouse was desperately resolved. He had hitherto kept his steed rather in hand. He now plied him with the terrible Spanish rowels which he wore, and which he never used but in extreme cases. To the surprise of the outlaw, who had judged of the horse by his previous performances, the animal made but a single bound or two, to bring his rider within striking distance; then, as the outlaw fumbled to extricate his remaining pistol from the left holster, he beheld, to his increased surprise, a gleaming sabre suddenly plucked from an invisible scabbard, and wielded, with a wonderful ease, in the left hand of his enemy! He bowed his body to the opposite side of the saddle, drove the spurs into his beast, bore down upon the curb to the left—almost swinging the horse about as he rode—and all this in a single moment—but all too late! A swift, sharp flash, as of lightning, seemed to darken his sight, and the next moment the keen, heavy steel might have been heard to gride through the solid skull of the victim. Down he sunk, hanging to one stirrup, while the frightened horse, dragging him forward, darted blindly into a clump of scrubby oaks, and became tangled and held, until caught by Millhouse. Captain Porgy came up a few seconds after almost as soon, indeed, as Millhouse, who

had just alighted to extricate and examine the body. They both bent over the fellow in this scrutiny, but to neither was the victim known.

"The face of the rascal is strange to me," said Porgy, "and that's a strange fact in my experience; for, in this seven years' war, I fancy I've made the acquaintance, in some way or other of all the rascals in the country. Do you know anything about him sergeant?"

"Only that he *is* a rascal, captain, or was so a while ago; and that he's dead now as Job's turkey, with a loss of all the profits of his trade. I never *seed* him afore."

"The scoundrel! Had he been Christian enough to have suffered himself to have been cut down five minutes ago, and before that last pistol-shot, I could have been sorry for him! But he has done for my noble gray, the best of friends; a horse that has borne his own flesh and mine so long to the satisfaction of both! I feel, sergeant, as if I could blubber like a boy over his first colt!"

Our two partisans did not waste any unnecessary time, you may be sure, in a fruitless examination of the outlaw's body; nor did they consume much thought in speculating upon an event that had too frequently occurred in their experience not to leave them comparatively callous.

"See what the rascal has about him, sergeant," said Porgy; and, like a good trooper, perfectly aware of what such cases usually required, Millhouse searched the clothes, and turned out the "silver lining" of the pockets of the dead man, with all the dexterity of a Parisian chiffonier. He stripped him of everything of value; and, seeing that he wore a tolerable pair of English boots, he had them off in the twinkling of an eye;—though how the thing was done—*our* chiffonier with one hand only—it is as difficult to describe as to conceive. His search into the pockets of the outlaw was productive of no very astonishing results. They yielded up only a few English shillings and sixpences, an empty flask—the odor of which still pungently declared for its former contents—a clasp, and a dirk-knife, extra flints and steel, a small finger-ring, and the fragment of a bracelet or necklace. The ring had been worn about the neck, suspended by a faded and soiled riband, which had once

been blue. Of what was this the miserable token? Was it love, or gratitude, or a filial feeling, which had hung this ornament about the neck of the ruffian? There is no record! The memorial was of a nameless virtue!

Captain Porgy surveyed these things, as they were severally produced by the search of the sergeant, and, after the scrutiny was over, he yielded them, with the grace of a feudal baron, to the possession of the latter.

"Keep 'em, Millhouse, until you find the proper heirs for them."

The sergeant grinned, as he replied—

"I reckon they'll be rether slow, cappin, to ask after 'em."

"Send them to me, should they ever be so bold, and these shall furnish my answer," quoth Porgy, at the same time taking possession of the holsters and pistols—a very useful pair of the bull species—which the outlaw had carried.

"These and the horse shall be mine, Millhouse; and then I lose by the exchange. My brave old gray! He was worth a score of such nags as this!"

And here he walked round the still trembling animal, taken from the outlaw.

"Yet he must do! He has bone and strength enough, perhaps, for a season in camp—peace and no active service! He will do to ride about the plantation, and for a Saturday hunt. He *must* do. The devil take the unchristian dog who should kill a man's horse in sheer wantonness, and when it couldn't profit him at all!"

"He worn't to know that, cappin," was the suggestion of Millhouse.

"He's wiser by this time! He *should* have known it. Did he expect to escape us both? Did he think I'd leave such an animal as mine unrevenged? If you hadn't cut him down, sergeant, and I had laid hands on him, I'd have scalped him! As it is, considering his condition, I forgive him. God forbid that I should harbor malice against the dead. But, were he living!—were he living!"

CHAPTER XXII.

DELIVERANCE.

Our captain of partisans, after this ebullition of pagan feeling and Christian philosophy, having mounted the horse of the ruffian, taken, perforce, in exchange for his own, proceeded, in considerable quietness, in the direction of the scene of former action, and where Lance Frampton remained in possession of the wagon. He was followed, more slowly, by Millhouse; that excellent trooper, following a practice that had been too much taught by the cruel war through which he had gone, leaving the carcass of the slain outlaw upon the spot where he had fallen—having no sort of notion, apparently, that humanity required him to give it better sepulture than that afforded by a wintry forest. We shall see, however, that the sergeant's omissions were repaired, at a more becoming moment, by his superior.

The negroes, meanwhile, still roped in pairs, had returned in safety to the wagon, and had been set free from their villein bands by the ready *couteau de chasse* of Lieutenant Frampton. Our captain, on his return, found the latter in quiet possession of the field of action, with the ruffian Norris well hampered with ploughlines under the tail of the wagon, and yoked to one of the wheels. He deigned but a single glance at the captive, who lay coiled up like a snake, looking quite as full of venom, and just as ready for the spring at his enemy's breast. But the ability no longer seconded the will. Captain Porgy could spare as little of his regard to the grouped negroes, who were all busy in replacking the wagon with its contents, which had been so unceremoniously tumbled out by the captive outlaw. He had recognised the voice of his own slaves, even in the hurry of his pursuit of the fugitives; but he had not then scanned their faces. Their familiar features, and affectionate assurances of love, touched the soul of the mammal and the selfish soldier, who was not wholly made of clay.

"Thank you, boys—thank you, my good fellows. God bless you! I'm really glad to see you again, all of you; and to see that the tories have't quite eaten you all; but, as for shaking hands just now, that's impossible. We must do our work first. Keep at yours, like good fellows; shovel in the kegs; and you shall all be rewarded. But now to business; and first, Lance, about the carriage, the widow and her party, and the rest of these robbers. What is your report? What have you seen? What heard? Speak—we have no time to lose!"

"Well, captain, there's nothing to report but what you see for yourself. *There's* the lady, I reckon—it's a woman, you see, sitting bolt upright in the front seat of the carriage. At least, it looks like a woman, by the dress; but I hain't seen it move once since I've been watching it. I've seen nobody, and nothing else, though I've kept a bright look out over all the track between, and the boys have been scouting just about here, and within reach of my rifle. I didn't want them to risk themselves by going too nigh to the carriage."

"You were right, particularly as you could see nothing stirring in that quarter. *That's* something singular. Our demonstration should have caused Fordham and young Eveleigh to show themselves, unless, indeed, they were hurt, or felt themselves to be watched by enemies. Have you kept your eyes, Lance, on that long grass around the carriage?"

"Yes, sir, pretty much, but couldn't see so much as a sparrow stirring anywhere. It's a dead calm, as far as I could see."

"Strange! We've chased two of these rascals. Here's a third. Are there more of them? John and Pomp reported half a dozen or more. They were probably mistaken. How now, Pomp—John?"

The two negroes disagreed; but they were positive as to five or six assailants on the ground.

"S'pose you ask *him*, captain," said Lance, pointing to the captive outlaw.

"To be sure—right! Hark ye, fellow, who are you. What's your name? And how many had you in your company?"

The fellow glared up fiercely at the inquirer, but made no answer.

"Sullen, eh? Well, we will find a way to make you speak!

s words upon *this scoundrel. We must* question! A rope, *with a swinging limb* at the other, *will probably find an an-* d sometimes even rises into eloquence. the best. Mount you, Lance, and *we'll* er the carriage. We can't be mousing onjectures. Here comes Tom, too, just ust him to keep watch over this rascal. take these pistols—keep them within 's head; and give him his physic, a full f he offers to give you trouble, or if any- 'Light, I say, you lazy rascal, and he

—you talk as of I hadn't a hundred poun' nigger t'ighs [thighs]! Gib 'em time, I oys! You Pomp, and John, and Dick, you all, you han'some pot-black rascals! ? Help tak' off some of dese pratic'lars h to bury any man, eben ef he bin name

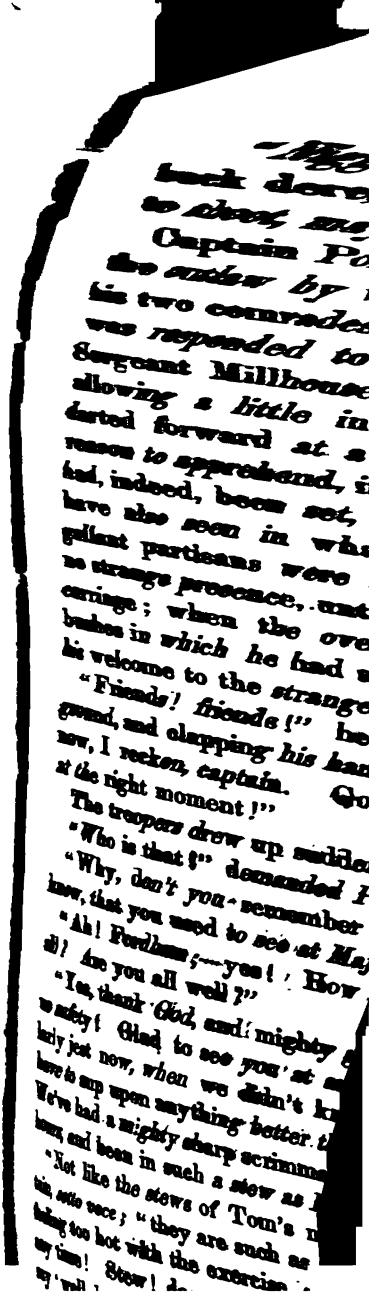
went to Tom's assistance.

you *is* load mos' like a mule," quoth ay the thigh of the cook in the endeavor without first remarking that it was well

ead dis mule, berry much as ef you was Dere—you hab 'em now: you see the little strap and buckle!"

er a while, and, now alight, was provided om the outlaw whom Millhouse had cut lf at the head of the captive, Norris.

he to the ruffian, "jes you be easy and l g'e [give] you the benefit of dese yer —showing the two pistols in ugly prox- ws as he spoke. Tom was an old sol ; who stood ready at all times, to exe- rs without the smallest scruple. He ccasion like the present, in his sense of vation.



"Niggers!" said he to the clustering slaves, "you kin stan' back dere, and not crowd too close 'pon de buckrah wha' I got to shoot, may-be!"

Captain Porgy, mounted, as we have seen, upon the horse of the outlaw by whom his own had been shot, having seen that his two comrades were quite ready, now gave the signal, which was responded to by a tremendous shout from the throat of Sergeant Millhouse. The worthy captain took the lead, and, allowing a little interval between them, the three partisans darted forward at a smart gallop, riding, as they had every reason to apprehend, into something like a wolf-trap. The trap had, indeed, been set, as we have sufficiently shown; but we have also seen in what manner its teeth were drawn. Our gallant partisans were unassailed by any foe, and encountered no strange presence, until they were within thirty yards of the carriage; when the overseer, Fordham, sprang up from the bushes in which he had so long been crouching, and cried out his welcome to the strangers.

"Friends! friends!" he shouted, dropping his rifle to the ground, and clapping his hands. "We're none but friends here, now, I reckon, captain. God be praised for sending you jest at the right moment!"

The troopers drew up suddenly.

"Who is that?" demanded Porgy.

"Why, don't you remember me, Captain? Fordham, you know, that you used to see at Major Eveleigh's, and——"

"Ah! Fordham;—yes! How are you, my good fellow, and all? Are you all well?"

"Yes, thank God, and mighty glad to see you, as you bring us safety! Glad to see you at any time, captain; but particularly jest now, when we didn't know whether we should ever have to sup upon anything better than lead and cold steel agin! We've had a mighty sharp scrimmaging here for more than three hours, and been in such a stew as I don't want to be in ag'in."

"Not like the stews of Tom's making then," quoth our captain, *sotto voce*; "they are such as a man might swim in without feeling too hot with the exercise, or getting beyond his depth at any time! Stew! do you say, Mr. Fordham! I trust I can say 'well done' to you!"

"Well, it's pretty well, then, I tell you! I'm thinking, considering all things, we made a pretty good *out* of it—Master Arthur Eveleigh and me! But God be praised for bringing you when he did; for I don't know how it would ha' turned out in the end. Even *if* we could ha' stood it out till dark night, then, their greater number would have brought them down upon us; and on which side, there would be no telling. You've saved us, captain, I tell you; and thank you for it—and bless God for it, and all other marcies."

By this time, they were joined by young Arthur Eveleigh, who showed himself, rising out of the bushy fastnesses, as soon as he heard Fordham cry aloud in tones of confidence and cheer. He promptly came forward and joined the party, and was hurriedly introduced by Fordham, to the captain of partisans, but not before the worthy fellow had embraced the youth with such a sense of joyous relief, as was natural to a heart so loyal under the circumstances. He then brought the youth forward, saying:—

"This, Captain Porgy, is Master Arthur Eveleigh, son of the widow Eveleigh, whom you remember. He's done mighty good service in this scrimmaging business. He'll be a man, I tell you, of ever there was one."

"Good!" answered Porgy, alighting and grasping the hand of the blushing youth, with an encouraging frankness, "You've begun early, and well, Master Arthur; and a good beginning is always half the battle! I'm glad of it for your sake, and that of your parents! But, talking of your parents, reminds me of your excellent and amiable mother, whom I claim as an old friend. Let us go to her assistance. I trust that she's not hurt."

And the captain of partisans turned and proceeded toward the carriage, accompanied by the others.

"I think not; I hope not," answered the youth anxiously, while hurrying forward ahead of the rest, his stride increasing to a bound and run, as he advanced. The eyes of Porgy followed him.

"A fine, vigorous lad; well made; looks like his father in form, his mother in face; beating the eyes, which are not blue, and which look far less amiable. I should say the lad was a bold, rash, high-spirited fellow.

"He's all that, captain! He'll fight, too, like the devil 'Twa'n't so easy to keep him back and quiet; to keep him from putting his head up as a mark; but he'll soon l'arn, with proper edication!—It's surprising how well he could take the track and keep it. The work was to keep him *down*; but he had sense enough to see how 'twas needful! We've been watching here—jest covering the ground with our heads, for a good hour, not daring to stir—not knowing how soon we should hear the crack of an inimy's rifle."

"How many of these rascals were there?" demanded Porgy. "We have one of them, a prisoner; one was cut down by Sergeant Millhouse; and another made his escape into the swamp, half a mile or so below. That accounts for *three* of them."

"There were six in all, at first, I reckon; but it's not so certain but there might have been more. Of these we killed *one*."

"There are then, at least, two yet to account for. They must be about—are probably not far off. But they will keep snug and quiet for awhile. It's hardly likely that they will attempt anything farther at present. But keep your rifles primed, and your horses at hand. We must not let ourselves be surprised!"

These orders were given more in detail to Lance Frampton. He and Sergeant Millhouse made themselves busy, and took the necessary precautions. Meanwhile, Capt. Porgy proceeded toward the carriage, having considerately delayed his own and the movements of Fordham, in that direction, by saying—

"A moment or two, Mr. Fordham! Let the young man release his mother himself!"

The youth, meanwhile, had sprung with proper alacrity to this grateful duty. The mother and son embraced with mutual tears and thankfulness. The glad widow held the happy boy apart from her, gazed fondly in his face, and then, even where she stood, in the box of the coachman, sank down upon her knees in silent prayers to Heaven. The boy instinctively sank down beside her, and both yielded themselves, in the sight of Heaven, to frank and fervent but silent prayer.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE SOLDIER AND THE LADY.

The good sense, and good taste, of Captain Porgy, sufficed to prevent him from interrupting such a scene. He stood apart, conferring with Ferdham, seeming to see nothing at the carriage; but his eye took in all the sweet picture of maternal love; of all the forms of love, perhaps, the most pure, the least selfish, the longest lived! At length, the voice of the widow was heard calling our partisan.

"Captain Porgy!—will you not suffer me to thank you?"

Our captain, as we know, was not one of the most sprightly of living cavaliers. Agility, as he himself freely admitted, formed no part of his physical virtues; but he certainly made the most astonishing efforts, at this summons, to appear agile; and did succeed, we allow, in reaching the carriage in a tolerably short space of time, and without appearing too greatly breathed from the exertion. As he drew nigh, the widow, supported by her son, alighted from the box, and extended her hand to the grasp of her deliverer. Conspicuous on each of her wrists was a dark ring, the mark of the cords with which she had been tied by the ruffians.

"How much ought I to thank you, Captain Porgy,—how much do I owe you, sir! See from what indignities you have rescued me?"

"Would I had been with you some hours sooner, my dear madam," cried the captain, seizing her hand and carrying it, in courtly fashion, to his lips. Those were days, be it remembered, of more lavish ceremonial than ours; and the act was held one of mere grace, rather than of gallantry. At all events, it seemed to occasion no emotion in the bosom of Mrs. Eveleigh, and lea soned, in no degree the warmth of her acknowledgments.

"That you have come in season for our safety—to relieve

my dear son, and this brave man to whom I owe so much, is quite enough to make me thankful to God, and for ever grateful to you! Ah! sir, I have passed a terrible hour and more! How I bore up against my own terrors, thus fettered, and unable to act, or even to speak, without going mad, I know not! But all is over now, I trust! There is no more danger?"

"I hope not—I believe not, my dear Mrs. Eveleigh; and, now that it is over, perhaps I ought to congratulate you on what has taken place. It has had its good along with its evil. It has brought out the manhood in your brave son, and shown the admirable stuff which he has in him for future work. Mr. Fordham has given me a glowing account of his conduct. I am really sorry, for his sake, that our wars are ended. I should like to take him into my keep as my ensign."

The tears again gathered into the mother's eyes, while the boys cheeks became crimson. Some further conversation ensued between the widow and the partisan on this subject, so grateful to the mother, until the lad himself interposed, and in a whisper, taking her hand, said—

"No more, mother, if you please! If Captain Porgy knew *all* that I had done, he wouldn't be so ready to praise me, I assure you."

The partisan half heard the words, and guessed the meaning of the rest; and rejoined good naturedly and sensibly—

"Ah! my dear fellow, you are conscious of some mistakes, perhaps; but that is only another proof in your favor. A fool is never aware that he has made any blunders—never! To be conscious that you have done so, is the first proof of wisdom—the necessary process by which to avoid them in future. You were too quick and rash; too hasty; and fancied you understood the whole game, when you were only taking the first lessons in it. An error, doubtless; but one, my dear boy, that seems natural to our climate; where one usually dates his manhood from the moment when he instructs his father in what way properly to break his eggs. You will soon get over all your mortifications of this description—too soon, perhaps."

But we do not propose to report the whole of the dialogue, as it took place between the parties;—a dialogue, such as can readily be conjectured under the circumstances, and at the meet-

ing of old friends, after such a long interval of time, occupied by war and its worst vicissitudes. Captain Porgy, himself, not regardless of duty, soon brought the merely amiable in their conversation to a close; though it was, evidently, very grateful to him. It seemed to restore him at once to the social sphere from which he had so long been an exile. He thus changed the topic—

"But we must reserve these matters, Mrs. Eveleigh, for a moment of greater leisure. We must not forget our duties now. The sun wanes, and you have yet to find your way home. We have accounted for all these outlaws, but two; and to do our work thoroughly, we should give an account of *them*. Two have been slain outright, one by your party, and another by mine; one is even now our prisoner; and the fourth man we have seen making his escape into the swamp, below, where we can not now hope to hunt him up. There are still two others, somewhere, lurking in the neighborhood, of whom we must ascertain all that we can within the next two hours, or before dark."

"I am somewhat bewildered," said the lady, "and have suffered so much from the sun in my eyes, and the cords about my arms, that I may have allowed things to pass under my very sight without being altogether conscious of the fact; but, just before the last skirmish of Mr. Fordham and my son, there were two of them harbored very near the carriage; one on that side," pointing to the right, "whom I could not see after he first proceeded in that quarter; while the other was hidden among these myrtles just in front. Now, I've never seen *that last one* leave his position."

With a few bounds, as he heard these words, Lance Frampton was at the indicated spot. He stooped—then cried out—

"He's here, sure enough; stone-dead, with a bullet through his head!"

He drew the body out of the bushes as he spoke.

"That was *your* bullet, Master Arthur," said Fordham.

"And a *chance* bullet too," replied the ingenuous youth. "I felt so *much* ashamed at having fired, thinking that I had thrown the shot away!—for I felt that I had taken no aim at all!"

"Ah!" said Porgy, "you know not how wonderfully the hand

seconds the eye, and both the will, when there is no time left for preparation. The best shots are frequently those which are taken when we are so conscious of a *purpose*, that we are wholly unconscious of an *aim*. If the will is right, the hand and eye obey, as implicitly as the slave of an Eastern despot!"

"I remember the moment that you shot, my son!" said the widow, with a shudder of horror, as the body was drawn out of the bushes. "He rose out of that very clump of grass and myrtle; swore, and shook his fist at me, and made some horrible threats. It was because I had called out to warn Mr. Fordham, whom I had seen approaching, where they were in concealment. I only *saw* Fordham; but I concluded you were somewhere with him, and I trembled at the cunning ambush which they had set. It was all over in a moment. It seemed as if I heard the outlaw and the shot all in the very instant when I was speaking."

"No doubt," answered Porgy. "There's now only one for whom we can not account, and of him we may be sure of this—that he will not remain long in a neighborhood the climate of which has been so unfriendly to the health of his people. At all events, Mrs. Eveleigh, it would be only looking through the haystack for the cambric needle, to attempt to hunt him up, at this late hour, and on the edges of this swamp! And yet"—looking round upon the dense thickets which indicated the swamp fortresses—"poor as I am, I would give the last hundred guineas for a couple of good Scotch blood-hounds, or Spanish, for a single hour! But the wish is idle. There are, nevertheless, some things within our power, Mrs. Eveleigh, and the first is to get you homeward with all despatch. We must use promptly all the daylight that is left us; and, with all our efforts, it will be a little in the night before you can possibly get home. Still, there can be no danger now! Neither of the two rogues whom we shall leave running, will be so hardy as to attempt anything new in this quarter; and you will have quite a sufficient escort in your son and Mr. Fordham. They have already managed successfully a force of *six* assailants; they will have no difficulty in managing a *couple*. But even these two, it is likely, do not hunt together. The one we drove into the swamp, took its shelter some two miles below. The other

scoundrel, as last reported, had his perch rather above than below. Be it as it may, you must push on for home, before night, under your escort. You need not fear these ruffians, who, even if they had nothing to apprehend from *our* superior force, bringing up the wagon and the rear as we propose to do, would never attempt your carriage now, guarded by your son and Fordham. Leave me to secure your property, and guard your negroes home. The more grateful duty would be to guard yourself, but the more arduous is here. Fordham will now be on *his* guard against surprise; and, to render you quite safe and sure, I will confide a few pistols to some of your most courageous negroes—your fellow Sylvester, for one. These will suffice. With my party I will remain, and see to the repair and reloading of your wagon, the horses of which, I perceive, my people have already recaptured. It shall follow you as soon as ready. But, the sooner you start the better. You have hardly an hour of sunlight left, and the rogue sees better in the night than the honest man, as the owl sees better than the chicken."

The widow was quite sensible of this good advice, and prepared for its adoption. Her servants rapidly got her carriage ready, the traces, where they had been cut, being supplied with plough-lines. The appearance of his own negroes assisting in this duty, reminded our captain of the active agency of the widow, in recovering them for him from the British hulks—a circumstance of which she had entirely foreborne to speak.

"I, too, have my thanks, my dear Mrs. Eveleigh, since, as I learn, but for your keen eye, and fearless spirit, my negroes would now be on their way to the British West Indies. But I must take a less hurried moment for making my acknowledgments."

"Don't speak of it, my dear captain; I did only as a neighbor should have done. But, of course, you will accompany my people to my house. Your own will scarcely give you a proper shelter just now."

"No, thank you a thousand times, but I have some of my old and young soldiers with me——"

"I have room for all," said the hospitable widow.

"I thank you again; but I must see to these negroes; and—"

The captain paused. The widow fancied there was some hi-

tle embarrassment in his manner. She fancied there was a slight flushing through all the bronze on his cheeks. Mrs. Eveleigh was a woman of good sense and good feeling. Such a person always receives an apology — for what it is worth; at least she never disputes it, driving the apologist to the wall, and exposing to himself the poverty of his excuses. She behaved, accordingly, in the right manner. She forebore annoying him, the moment she discovered him resolved to excuse himself. She took for granted that he had his reasons, proper enough for himself, which it might not be proper for him to unfold. This was enough.

"As you please, captain. Remember, from this moment, I take for granted that you will feel yourself always welcome, and at home, at *my* house. Your old and young soldiers will share this welcome — all whom you command. Pray believe, in addition, that I shall desire to see you at an early moment. I have much to hear from you, and something to communicate. Why not ride over and dine with me to-morrow, or the day after, and bring your friends with you?"

"And very much delighted, indeed, to do so, Mrs. Eveleigh, if it be possible. At all events, I shall let you know in due season, if I shall not be able to come to-morrow. Believe me, I have not been living so long in camp as to have quite lost my relish for a good dinner."

"Visit her now," quoth Porgy, turning away to see after the coach and wagon, "with such a beard — mixed grey and brown, salt and pepper — and in this travelling gear — a break under the arm, a rent in ——"

And he paused as if at some unmentionable difficulty — then proceeded —

"No! no! One puts on his best favors and front, when he goes to court, even in a republic. This grizzly beard!" —

Here he stroked his chin reproachfully — literally took himself by the beard — and added —

"Who the devil could have anticipated such an adventure! — That I should have put away my best things in my valise!"

He was brought to think of other matters by the approach of his lieutenant. Meanwhile, all were busy. To gather the negroes and horses together, repair the harness, and set the coach

man once more upon his box, was a task of so great labor with so many hands. Fortunately, the outlaws had left behind them an abundance of plough-line, and there was a bolt of rope in the wagon. The harness was quickly put in strong travelling order, and all ready for a start in a much shorter period of time than had been anticipated. The widow, accompanied by her son, Fordham and the servant girl, bade Porgy and his followers a friendly farewell; repeating her thanks to all, and giving separate and warm invitations to each to visit her; which all parties promised. When they were fairly out of sight of the troopers, she called the overseer to the side of the coach.

"Mr. Fordham, have you been lately to Captain Porgy's place?"

"Not later than a month ago, ma'am, or thereabouts. I pass it constantly, you know."

"It is all destitute, I think; almost in ruins?"

"The house is good, ma'am, wants a little repairing; but there's not a stick of fence, and——"

"Ah! that's not what I mean! Do you suppose he has any provisions there?"

"Not the feather of a chicken, ma'am—not the hair of a hog! How should he? The niggers eat him out before the tories took 'em off. They left nothing. There may be a few cattle in the swamps, and perhaps hogs; but it's worth more than they'd bring to look 'em up."

"How then is he to feed all these people?"

"God knows, ma'am; it's a wonder to me."

"Mr. Fordham, we must take care of him and them for the present. Men who have so long served, and helped to save, the country, and who have so lately served and saved us, must not be suffered to want. I'll tell you what you must do."

"To be sure, ma'am."

"When we reach his place, we shall be so nigh our own that there can scarce be any further danger from these outlaws. You will, accordingly, stop at Captain Porgy's, and stop the wagon there also, when it arrives. Knock open the sugar barrel, and leave him a fourth of it; give him a like proportion out of the coffee sack. There are, I think, four boxes of candles, leave him one. Put out for him, also, a dozen of the blankets,

and if you can think of any other matters, that may be useful from among our stores, leave him a like supply. When I get home, I will send him some meal and bacon. Oh! don't forget to leave him one of the jugs of Jamaica. These soldiers are all fond of spirits, you know."

Porgy would have retorted—How else should they have spirit?

The plethoric old soldier little dreamed, at that moment, what the charities of the amiable widow had decreed for his creature comfort. As little did she conjecture the sort of business which, at the same time, occupied his hands. Let us return to him and note the progress of events.

CHAPTER XXIV.

JUDICIAL DIGNITY IN THE FOREST.

Our captain of partisans would have gladly undertaken the escort of the widow, had circumstances—in which the condition of his travelling costume must be included—allowed. But he felt, as leader of the party, so suddenly engaged in such an adventure as that which followed his encounter with the outlaws, that a serious further duty had devolved upon him; and, however selfish or luxurious his character might be, it was seldom that he permitted his tastes, or his love of ease and enjoyment, to thwart the performances to which he was professionally bound. He was a soldier, not less than a *bon vivant* and gentleman. True, he had been regularly dismissed from duty. He was no longer an officer in command. There was no longer an army. But he had character. He was sure of his own honesty. He felt, and understood, the lawlessness which prevailed throughout the country; and, in the deficiency of courts and sheriffs, he resolved that he was still a captain of militia, and that each militia officer was, *ad interim*, in the commission of the peace.

The old idea of *regulation* was as much the fashion throughout the country as ever. It was now as much the *necessity* of

the region, as it had been in the early stages of society when the practice originated. The woods were filled with outlaws and offenders? and, to await the slow processes of the courts of law, at such a period, and in a country so sparsely settled, was to sacrifice all the securities of the better sort of people. Society, in such cases, always resorts to the necessary means for sustaining law; and the morals of law always will, and should, sustain what are the obvious necessities of society. In this you have the full justification of the code of regulation; a code which is, no doubt, sometimes subject to abuse, as is the case with law itself, but which is rarely allowed to exist in practice among people of Anglo-Norman origin — a day longer than is absolutely essential to the common weal. Captain Porgy simply fulfilled the conditions of this code, when he resolved on subjecting the captive outlaw to the tender mercies of an extempore court of justice, all the members of which had been trained in a severe military school, the rules of which recognised no limits to its own powers, and usually threw upon the accused the burden of proof, in establishing his own innocence.

The wagon of Mrs. Eveleigh, reloaded, and despatched upon its way, under an escort composed wholly of the slaves of the widow — several of whom, including John Sylvester, had been armed with the view to its defence, should either of the two outlaws in the woods be prepared and in the humor to attempt further mischief, which was held to be scarcely possible — our captain established himself under a goodly oak, planted himself comfortably upon a heap of dry leaves at its roots, and instructed Sergeant Millhouse to bring the offending outlaw before him.

This order was promptly obeyed. His coat off, his arms bound behind him, the outlaw, Norris, was pushed forward by Millhouse, his *one* hand diligently applying the point of his sword to the fellow's haunches, whenever he halted or seemed unnecessarily reluctant. Norris was sullen and savage both, looked the tiger, and spoke as snappishly as a lean cur over a beggarly bone, with two or three other companion curs, as lean as himself, watching, close at hand, for the opportunity to dart in and bear away the prize. The fellow's case was desperate, and he knew it! He had been taken *flagranti delicto*; and he had sufficient experience of law, when administered by a mili-

tary man, to know that it was usually a matter singularly decisive and summary in all its processes. He was a hardy ruffian; and, with a gloomy sense of the danger that awaited him, his habitual mood now assumed the appearance of insolence and audacity.

But he was in the hands of those who had been accustomed to deal with all sorts of offenders. Porgy awaited his approach with rare patience of demeanor. His pistols, taken from his holsters, lay before him. His sword, unbelted but sheathed, crossed his lap. We are constrained to state the further fact, that our captain of partisans, in order to the more easy administration of justice, had unbuttoned coat, vest, and small-clothes, as far as he possibly could without actually discarding them; and his appearance was, accordingly, significant of a singular looseness of habit, which, we are pleased to say, did not by any means represent his usual moral character. Let us add, also, that the act which gave him this peculiar laxity in dress, was studiously forborne until the carriage of the fair widow was quite out of sight. Captain Porgy was one of that good old school, which, where ladies and gentlemen were concerned, was always carefully tender of the proprieties. The school is somewhat out of fashion now, and is supposed to need its apologies; but we have not space enough for them in this place.

Lance Frampton stood a little on one side of the judge; but the latter, after the prisoner had been brought up, bade him be seated as one of the court. Porgy was heedful of all details.

"You, sergeant," said he to Millhouse, "acting as sheriff, will be required to stand. A certain degree of vigilance is necessary always, even when the court feels itself perfectly secure. Ensign," to Lance, "take your seat more to the left; let the tree be a little between us—where you are now, we might both be ranged with a single rifle-shot; a fact which might tempt the rascal, yet in the woods, to let drive at us."

As this was spoken, the prisoner began to whistle. The sounds were suddenly silenced by a smart blow from the stump f Sergeant Millhouse's game hand, who well understood the object of the whistle.

"Wait with your music till it's called for, my lark," quoth the vigilant sergeant.

The ruffian twitched violently at the cords by which his wrists were fastened, evidently desirous of resenting the indignity; and, failing in this, he plunged his head incontinently into the breast of the assailant, with bull-like ferocity. He was not tall enough to address his battering-ram at the face of the sergeant, or he might have done mischief to the mazzard of the veteran. The latter was taken by surprise, and almost lost his feet, as well as his breath, for a moment; but his huge and well buttressed form was staggered only, not overthrown; and, recovering himself, he dropped his sword, and planted a settler in the nostrils of the outlaw, which laid him out like a log, the blood spurting, in a big stream, from the proboscis of the victim.

"Well delivered," quoth Porgy; "he will hardly try his horns upon you a second time, Mr. Sheriff. Help him to rise, boys." This was said to the negroes who hung around, quite delighted with the solemnity of the scene, and the action which had begun with so much spirit, and which promised to be so enlivening. Pomp, the fiddler, absolutely lost his propriety so far as to wave his fiddle aloft, while executing a sort of wild-colt movement upon his pins—a proceeding which was quickly arrested by an order of his master, to "box that fellow up till he's wanted." Pomp sank back demurely enough, and took especial care, during the rest of the scene, to attract no especial attention to himself: Tom, the cook, giving him first a gentle admonition, by a sharp sudden gripe about his weasand. This little episode occupied but a few moments. The outlaw Norris, half-stunned, was raised once more to his feet, the blood still dripping from his nostrils. Captain Porgy surveyed him very much as the Bow-street magistrate is said to examine the visages of old offenders, or those whom he thinks so; but he did not fall into the usual habit of that officer, of finding the offender always ill-looking. On the contrary, he had a different theory in such matters.

"But that you have spoiled his nose for a time," quoth Porgy, "the offender would be a good-looking fellow—even handsome, perhaps, stripped of his brush, and with a clean shirt on. Is it not curious that these rogues should be so commonly handsome? I don't remember one whom we have had to hang, who wouldn't be accounted quite a pretty fellow among the women? There was that fellow, Bryce, whom we left swinging at Four Holes: he

was a fine-looking fellow, Lance. And old Echars, the Dutchman, whom we dressed in tar and feathers at Monk's Corner, for stealing cattle, he was a beauty, though nearly sixty years of age. You see, my friend, that beauty is a snare. It makes many a poor fellow a rogue. I suppose, because it first makes him a fool. It turns his head; and when the head's turned, a fellow ceases to be a man, and goes to the devil like a beast. It is the head that keeps a man in position. Let him lose that balance, and he staggers, from right to left, with a sort of moral drunkenness. Talking of drunkenness, reminds me that a good sup of Jamaica would not be amiss after that little run we had, Sergeant Millhouse; but"—with a sigh—"we must now think of other matters! A handsome rascal, indeed! but"—addressing the prisoner abruptly—"well, my good fellow, how do you call yourself?"

Let us leave this examination for a moment, in order that all the parties to the scene should be properly shown up, each in his exact position, to the eye of the reader. Thus far, the whole progress of the affair had been witnessed, though imperfectly, at the distance of two or three hundred yards, more or less, by the out-lying squatter, Bostwick. Perfectly familiar with the ground and region, he had regulated his own course and movements entirely by those of the party which he no longer dared to assail. By crawling and creeping, crouching and winding—by stealthy movements, like those of the wild-cat and fox—by a sinuous progress like that of the serpent—he had wound his way from point to point, wherever he fancied that a good place could be had for surveying the proceedings of his enemies. In this progress he omitted no precaution, and none suspected how closely they were watched. It was the conviction of Porgy and the rest that the outlaws were completely dispersed; and that, terrified by the execution done among them—the death of no less than three of their number, and the captivity of a fourth—the two, escaping, had fled incontinently from the dangerous neighborhood.

But Bostwick had several reasons for lingering upon the ground, even after the chances of profit had wholly disappeared. He had a fellow-feeling for his captive comrade; and, as he had frequently done before, was prepared to follow the footsteps of

his captors, in eager expectation of the moment when their vigilance would so relax as to enable him to effect his rescue, even at some hazard to himself. He was thus far faithful to the bond of brotherhood, which is said to be sacred even among thieves. He was prepared, as we shall see, for other necessities. He was not long permitted to remain in doubt as to the purposes of Captain Porgy and his associates; these, indeed, he readily divined. He naturally conjectured that the policy of the captors would prompt them to ascertain from the prisoner all the facts of the expedition—the parties by whom it was set on foot—the persons actually engaged in it, and the motives by which it was prompted. All the proceedings, as already described, confirmed him in his conjectures; and his interest and anxiety continued to increase, as he beheld the deliberation with which the party commenced the affair. He had got as near to the spot as he well dared, from that quarter of the woods which afforded him concealment, relying not less on the depth of cover which he occupied than upon the facility with which, in the event of danger, he could glide unseen into the recesses of the adjacent swamp.

Here he beheld the progress of affairs; saw Porgy let himself down deliberately at the base of the oak; beheld the prisoner brought up; heard the beginning of his whistle, and saw the summary manner in which he had been silenced by the gamehand of Sergeant Millhouse. The fierce assault of Norris, by which he had resented the blow, and the severe punishment which he had received in consequence, added to his excitement; and, but for the madness of such an act, he would have darted out to the succor of his comrade. He forebore; but it was with a feverish vexation, which kept him singularly fidgetty and restless. Not a syllable could he distinguish of what was said by either of the parties; but he could very well conjecture what was likely to be said. His disquiet greatly increased in consequence of his inability to hear. His interest was by no means an unselfish one. He knew that Norris was a stubborn scoundrel, hardened in sin, callous by repeated infamies; and one whom frequent hair-breadth escapes had rendered tenacious of his secret, and more than commonly confident of his good luck in escape. But the squatter dreaded still, lest temptation and

fear combined should finally get the better of his hardihood, and prompt those revelations which must be fatal to his own safety. Could he have heard the proceedings, he would have been more at ease, even though these should only tend to confirm his apprehensions.

With a mood that became momently more and more desperate from the very continuance of his doubts, Bostwick began, at length, to finger the lock of his rifle, scarcely conscious that he was doing so. He could scarcely resist the impulse which prompted him to send a bullet through the provoking abdomen of the captain of partisans, now rendered doubly offensive to the eye by the removal of the usual restraints of button, belt and buckle. At another moment his thought would be to single out, as a victim, the tall, erect, and raw-boned figure of the sergeant, acting as sheriff in the proceedings. Could he have got the three—the captain, ensign, and sergeant—in a range, or even two of them, he had never resisted the temptation. He had, under these exciting tendencies, continued to crawl and creep up within a hundred and thirty yards of the scene of trial, and at such a distance, with a rest, he had the most perfect faith in his own skill to make his mark, and the capacity of his rifle to speed the bullet home.

The disposition grew in his mind to adopt some such desperate course of action. He looked about him, accordingly, with regard to the means left him for escape, should he resolve to fire. This examination of the spot which he occupied, led him instantly to change it—a proceeding which involved, necessarily, some little loss of time. But he moved briskly, as well as stealthily, and at length found himself in a more satisfactory place of concealment and ambush, upon the edge of the swamp, where he was sheltered partly by the dense thicket of gall-bushes, of which we have already given some idea. Here, at his back, were all the facilities for flight, by a sinuous progress, and under cover all the way. Here ran a mighty cypress, half-buried in water, hidden from view by a wilderness of bushes, growing upon the tussocky ridge on the edge of which it had fallen. Farther on, a clump of bays, or dwarf-laurel, interposed to receive him. Beyond was a tract of the gall and hurrah-bushes, matted by vines, which seemed to enmesh their entire

tops; beyond, the places of refuge spread away interminably, forming, even in daylight, an almost perfect shelter; but at nightfall, a questionless place of security. The region, which was called "Bear Castle" by the neighborhood, was one which he well knew. It yielded him, comparatively speaking, a perfectly safe mode of retreat from the point where he established himself, in the event of any necessity occurring for sudden flight. Here he found himself in a place altogether to his liking; one in which he might contrive to obtain a knowledge of what was going on among the partisans; overlook their proceedings, and interpose, if necessary, at the proper moment; yet one which he could leave at a short notice, and without embarrassment, for the deeper recesses of the swamp thicket.

"And now," said he to himself, "Dick Norris, it's jist as hell and you chooses! Ef you're the man to hold out, I'm the man to help you! You've been in as tight a fix afore now, and you know that I stuck by you then! Set your teeth hard, Dick, and I reckon we can scrape you through!"

This was all said in a whisper, though as if the person spoken to could hear. Bostwick now appeared more at his ease, was cooler and more composed; and, satisfied to have gained the required place of watch and safety, not much over a hundred yards from the place of trial, rifle in grasp, and *couteau de chasse* loosened in his belt, crouching beside a pine which grew upon a bank somewhat raised above the general level, before which stretched a little forest of gall-bushes and young myrtle, he peered keenly through the vistas of the wood, not losing a single movement among those he watched, while his comrade was undergoing "The Question."

CHAPTER XXV.

RAPID PROCESSES OF EXTEMPORE LAW.

"The Question," verily, in the sense usually given to the phrase in the times—which the silly world usually calls, "good old times,"—when state tyranny, and the Spanish Inquisition, were in *full blast*,—to use a vulgar idiom, but a very appropriate figure—did the trial of Norris, by our military court, promise in reality to be. Bostwick well knew the usual practice on all such occasions. He had some personal experience of "the question" himself. He had, as we had gathered from his words, been more than once instrumental in rescuing his comrade from its operation. He did by no means despair, accordingly; but kept himself in reserve for the chapter of accidents.

Our captain of partisans very well understood that one of the outlaws *might* be lurking about, and looking on; but he little dreamed how nigh, or with what purposes in his mind. He was proceeding with singular calmness in the trial, but with a solemnity of manner fully proper to the enormous offence of the prisoner. We have heard the inquiry with which he commenced the examination of Norris. It met with no answer. The fellow sullenly stood up, though with half-shut eyes, through which the latent ferocity could be seen still to flash out brightly, and showing that the devil was by no means subdued, though bruised sorely, and in tight bonds.

"Hark ye, fellow," said Porgy, repeating the question, "do you hear?—by what name are you known among your kindred?—who are you?—and what has prompted you to the commission of this outlawry? Be civil now—your safety depends somewhat upon your fully unburthening your conscience of all its secrets. Give an account of yourself to the court."

"Court! I don't see any court!" responded the prisoner, with a mixed air of contempt and defiance.

"Ah! you don't, eh! Well, but what if it makes you *feel*

it? It strikes me there's something in *that!* Think better of it, my poor fellow, and answer the court with a decent sense of its power, if not of its authority."

"I'll answer when it suits me! Time enough, when I'm really before a court. You're none, I reckon. You're no more a jedge than I am."

"I'm sorry you think so, my good fellow," said Porgy, mildly: "for your own sake, you'd better come to the conclusion that we are a court, having the power of life and death; and prepare your defence accordingly. We give you a fair chance for your life. Tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and you don't know what good it will do you—if not in this world, at all events in the next. Confess who set you on this expedition—who were your associates—where do they harbor—what are the names of these who survive? Turn state's evidence as fast as you can, if you would be treated with indulgence."

"I don't see what you can do with me, but carry me to prison. There's no army! Don't I know that the army is broken up, and all the British gone. And there's no courts yit; and if there was courts, you, I reckon, aint no Jedge, and these niggers aint no jury! You kin only carry me to jail. That's the worst that you kin do; and I ain't afeered of any jail I ever seed yit!"

And he chuckled, with the feeling of one who had been particularly smart, if not severe.

"You grieve me, my interesting fellow, by your imperfect knowledge of the law! I am, at this moment, both judge and jury; and my excellent friend, on the right, is my sheriff, and the executioner of my decrees! These sons of Ethiopia are all good men and true, having an abiding sense of authority and justice. You will find them fully capable of understanding all the facts in your case; and I feel myself equally able to expound to them the law upon it. As for the army, my friend, that is never broken up, so long as there are criminals, like yourself, to be broken in. The good citizens of a country must always constitute a standing army for the purposes of public justice and public security. Answer, therefore, as civilly and fully as possible, the questions I shall put to you, if you would

secure for yourself the least indulgence. What may be your name?"

"I sha'n't tell you!" was the insolent reply.

"Well, perhaps that is not necessary. It is not necessary that we should know a man's name in order to hang him. In reporting our proceedings we shall, doubtless, find a name for you. For the present, we will consider you one John, or Tom, or Peter Nemo. Remember, Sergeant Millhouse, and you Pomp, and you, boys, generally, that the prisoner is called Peter Nemo, *alias* John Nemo, *alias* Nebuchadnessar Fish, *alias*——"

"I don't answer to any such names!"

"Silence gives consent! You don't answer to any name, now, it would seem, to any thing! Don't deceive yourself, my pleasing prisoner. I don't care a straw whether you answer or not. That's just as you please. But we must go through certain forms, for your own sake; and, for the same reason—simply to give you every chance—I must put some other questions to you. I don't want you to answer, if you don't think proper to do so. Who were your confederates, your allies, your associates, in this highway robbery?"

"There's no highway robbery."

"Sorry that we must differ, my friend, in this matter. You are unfortunate that we found you in the act—in the full possession of the plunder. I am indulgent to you. I will repeat the question—who were your associates in the interesting enterprise in which I found you engaged?"

"Nobody! Ask me no questions. I sha'n't answer. Take me to jail, if you choose."

"Jail, my friend! Impossible! I don't approve of imprisonment. It degrades a freeman into the condition of a wild beast. I should think a man of your spirit would prefer death, a thousand times, to incarceration within stone walls, and iron bracelets. No! no! my friend, we will not punish you so cruelly. Your tortures, when your trial is over, shall be short. Who was the ringleader in this expedition?"

"Oh! be d——d! Don't bother me with your axings. I ain't guine to answer nothing!"

"You are irreverent, my poor fellow; you don't know the mischief you may do yourself! Once more, let me know how

many persons, and who, were concerned in this enterprise, which you will not allow was highway robbery. Who first set you upon it; who was your leader: and what was your scheme throughout?—Make a clean breast of it, my good fellow, that you may have 'well done' said to you for once in your life."

"Ax away, 'tell you're tired. You git no answer from me, old Porpoise!"

"The poor, d——d fool!" quoth Millhouse, in a whisper to Lance. "Every word he says is a-hitching him tighter and tighter!"

"That has a salt-water sound!" was the remark of Porgy, quietly made, but there was a sudden redness about the cheek and gills, as he spoke, that showed him beginning to be chafed at the outlaw's insolence. He restrained every ebullition of temper, however, in recognition of what he held to be the solemn unimpassioned character of his present duty; and continued to put his questions, in various shapes, until he had exhausted all the proper subjects of inquiry, and afforded the prisoner the fullest opportunity to reveal all that he knew. This done, and the answers being all equally unsatisfactory and insolent, our captain of partisans turned to Sergeant Millhouse.

"Mr. Sheriff, we have given our prisoner every chance; but he is wedded to his idols and vanities—he rejects every opportunity of mercy! There is a proverb, Mr. Sheriff, upon which we, in the army, are always prompt to act, and the expediency of which our experience has usually confirmed—'The bird that can sing, and won't sing'—Eh! you remember, sergeant?"

"Must be made to *swing*!"

"Exactly!"

"I've been a-thinking, cappin, for a long time, that you was a'most forgitting our army practice. I've been a-wanting to clap a stopper on the fellow's muzzle ever sence you begun to ax him the questions."

"Ah! but a *muzzle* was not the thing exactly. To make him *unmuzzle*, was my object. Well, he would not do so to please us, we must now persuade him to do so to please himself! Give him a stretch, Sheriff! Appoint a couple of the Ethiopians, your deputies for the occasion, while you act as Provost Marshal,

and"—looking about and above him—"there is a good large hickory upon the left which seems to have stretched out its arms for the very purpose the moment it was wanted. Let him be persuaded to that hickory!"

Millhouse seemed to have provided himself with due reference to the exigency. His single remaining hand produced a coil of slender rope from behind him. A running noose was found in it already; and, calling Pompey from the crowd, the fiddler was made to take the rope over his shoulder, and ascend the hickory. He stood on one of its outstretching boughs, and, having dropped the cord across the bough, sat quietly awaiting the prisoner.

"You see!" said Porgy to Norris.

The fellow refused to look up, but sat doggedly, with his head stuck on one side, as if with the most rigid determination.

"You hear!" continued Porgy. "Be warned, my poor fellow, and make a free confession. There is no good reason why your tongue should make your throat suffer. Speak freely, and don't make a figure of yourself."

No answer!

"Let him be persuaded to speak, Mr. Sheriff," said Porgy, in accents as mild as those of Ali Pacha in his most patriarchal moments. In an instant, and at a sign from Millhouse, a couple of the negroes seized upon the prisoner, and in their stalwart arms, it required but a moment to conduct him to the designated tree. Another moment sufficed to slip the noose about his neck; this done, the negroes took hold of the rope with alacrity, and, thus in readiness, they looked to the captain for his further orders.

"You feel?" said Porgy to the outlaw.

No answer.

"My friend," continued the captain of partisans, "I would not ruffle a single feather in the wing of so innocent a bird as yourself; but birds must be made to sing at the proper season. Will you sing for us?"

"No! d——n my liver if I do!"

"You have been a bad *liver*, my poor fellow. Whether you will die as you have lived, is a question for yourself! I give you time. I am, naturally, the most tender-hearted man in the

world; but tough rogues must be made tender also. Confess! I would not be guilty of a cruelty to beast or man; but outlawry must be stopped; and thieving and murder are such offences, that indiscreet persons, like yourself, must be made to forbear them. Open your eyes to your danger, and empty your bosom of its evil secrets. I will count one dozen, while you meditate what to do.' I will count slowly, that you may have time for meditation; but, sc sure as I am an honest judge, and my sheriff a faithful officer, if, by the time I have said *twelve*, you do not confess, you ride a nag that blacksmith never yet tried to shoe."

And the captain of partisans began the tale with well measured deliberation; pausing, between the numbers, the length of a colon at least—"one:" "two:" "three;" and so-forth!

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE APPLICATION OF "THE QUESTION."

MEANWHILE, the squatter, Bostwick, had become quite sensible of the danger of his comrade. He could not mistake his situation, or the nature of the experiment which was about to be tried upon his firmness. Old experience had made him quite familiar with the whole process. He was very well aware that the purpose of the partisans would not be simply to execute punishment upon him, except in degree; and simply to the extent which would insure the revelation of his secret. But this was the very danger that he most dreaded. Were they to slay the prisoner outright, the squatter would be much less disquieted. But to force him to speak—to compel him to buy his life by giving up his comrades—was a danger to himself, involving many dangers, which he could by no means contemplate with serenity. Agitated by various dark and savage feelings, he unconsciously advanced several paces from the spot where he had sheltered himself. He advanced; but did not forget his caution. His approach was still from cover to cover; his place of conceal-

ment being always made sure of before taking a single forward step. But he again receded—once more crouched into the thicket, and leaned against the tree; the big sweat coursing, in beaded drops, upon his swarthy forehead. But he still kept watch upon his unhappy comrade, and upon the proceedings of his judges. Sometimes, he muttered in brief spasmodic soliloquy, as if endeavoring to assure himself, in some such utterances as the following:—

"He will die game! He will not confess! Very well—all's right! Norris was always a tough fellow. He won't give up! I wish I could help him; but that's impossible. But they won't carry it through! It's only to scare him! He knows *that!* He won't leak! He'll keep all close!—Ah!"

He again advanced, and a shudder went over his frame. He caught up his rifle, threw it out, and drew it to the range, as if in the act to fire, but in a moment after dropped it in the hollow of his arm again, while he murmured:—

"It's no use! It kin do no good! I might kill one on 'em, easy enough; but that wouldn't save him, and would only resk myself. Better he should die in the rope! Every man has his time. He must die some time or other. Ef I could help him, wouldn't I? But I can't! It's impossible, me one, to do anything! Ah! they're at him! The bloody tigers! I know what they're arter!"

Meanwhile, at the signal of Millhouse, the culprit was drawn up slowly into the air. His hands were tied behind him. He could offer no resistance. He showed no submission—uttered no entreaty—submitted doggedly to the torture—impressed with the idea, no doubt, that the party would not proceed to extremities, and that the purpose was to scare him only. He accordingly remained firm! He bore without a groan or struggle the painful distension of his frame, and the stifling pressure of the cord about his throat—his face alternately whitening and reddening, and his breast heaving, with the voluminous effort of his lungs.

Porgy watched the effect with painful feeling. Practice had not indurated him; and, though satisfied of the outlaw's deserts, and fully sensible of the importance of procuring his confession, and not prepared to quarrel with a process which the practice

of the army had fully justified—he was yet not insensible to the claims of humanity; and was disposed to spare the victim as much as possible. It is indeed highly probable, that, as was the conjecture of the prisoner himself, and of his ally the squatter, our captain of partisans did not really meditate anything beyond the wholesome fright which would compel the outlaw to disgorge his secrets. But the fellow remained obstinately silent, and his judges were disappointed.

"Ease him down, sergeant," was the order of the captain.

"Now, fellow," he continued, as soon as the criminal had somewhat recovered, "are you grown wiser? Do you begin to comprehend your danger? Are you ready to confess?"

The half-suffocated wretch answered with curses, and scorn, and defiance! In fact, from having been let down so soon, and having suffered so much less than he had anticipated, or had even endured before, he had grown more confident of his position, and more insolent accordingly. Porgy replied to him with real sympathy, but in his own manner.

"My poor fellow, you are trifling with your safety. You don't know your danger! Let me warn you. Do not force me to the last extremity."

A brutal oath was the only answer.

"Hoist away, boys," cried Millhouse, not waiting for the orders of his superior. Again the fellow was hauled up, again let down, but with the same result. Porgy began to grow restiff under the insolence of the outlaw, who, evidently suffering, was as insolent after recovering as ever. Time was accorded him, and now exhortations addressed to him.

"My poor fellow," said Porgy, "you must speak now or never! Your last chance is before you. If you go up again, you only come down to make a full confession, or you come down a dead man! You hear what I say? I am in earnest! You have shown yourself very much a fool as well as a robber. The time left you for growing wise is very short. The sun is near his setting! Confess your accomplices, and if we can catch and convict them by your evidence, we'll get you clear! Show yourself hardened, and you sleep to-night six feet under this tree. You have heard; will you deliver?"

"Do your d——dest! I ain't afear'd!"

This is quite enough of his answer, which exhibited greater brutality than before. We suppress the oaths with which he garnished every sentence. Again the executioners, at a signal from Millhouse, mutely drew the fellow up to the tree—this time with a swift motion and a somewhat rapid jerk. Millhouse had served as provost-marshal on other occasions. The outlaw now showed great distress. It was seen that his hands worked—opened and shut—as if giving signs; then he kicked desperately His gasping, at length, grew into sounds like speech, and the party below at once understood the half-stifled assurance, that he would confess if let down. The miserable wretch succumbed the moment he began to fear that his judge was in earnest. His sufferings were of a sort to induce this change in his opinions. He could not have borne them much longer and lived. He was already black in the face, and his eyes seemed starting from their sockets. Porgy had already thwarted his own policy in the premature yieldings which he had shown. He was evidently unwilling to urge the torture beyond the degree necessary for his object. He had tried to maintain his apparent calmness; it was a matter of pride with him that he should do so; but he was not always successful; and now, as he witnessed the sufferings of the outlaw, he cried out quickly to Millhouse:—

"Let him down, sergeant. For God's sake, let him down!"

Millhouse hesitated, and ventured to expostulate.

"He's a mighty tough rascal, cap'n! 'Tain't tell the life gits a'most clean out of the body of such a rascal, that the honesty gits in! Don't be too easy with him, or we'll have to do it all over again."

"Let him down, I say, sergeant!"

"Very well; it's jest as you say. One thing's sartain. He's had a leetle bit of a warning this time; jest a sort of idee of what's the raal state of the argyment. He feels it too. He's not guine to crow agin to-day—and when a rogue stops to crow, why, you may look for him to sing as you want him!"

Millhouse was a tough customer even as a soldier. While he soliloquized, he motioned the negroes to let the outlaw descend slowly. When the fellow reached the ground, and the rope was relaxed, he sank down upon the earth exhausted, though ap-

parently striving to speak. Lance Frampton promptly clapped a bottle to his mouth.

"Why, Lance, what's that?" inquired Porgy, with a new interest in the transaction. The youth slightly laughed.

"Jamaica, captain."

"Jamaica! Where did it come from?"

"The wagon, sir! This lark had been long enough in it to knock the bung out of a keg and try the liquor. It was open when they went to load the wagon, and Toby filled a bottle or two for us, thinking it might help us in sickness, or——"

"Ah! rascal—and you heard me sighing for this very stuff after our fatiguing services, and never gave signs of life!"

This was said very reproachfully.

"I knew the sort of work to be done, captain, and didn't know whether we ought to do any drinking in camp while the enemy was about us in the woods."

"You were right, boy! Many's the good fellow that has lost his scalp from taking too much heed to his swallow. But I am not the person, as you should know, to err thus—and I was almost fainting."

"Yes, sir, but if you had seen the bottle, the sergeant and Tom, sir, would have have seen it too, and——"

"Git out, you impartinent!" quoth Millhouse, interrupting him, with a slight kick—"and don't be choking him with an overdose."

He pushed him away from Norris as he spoke. The outlaw, meanwhile, had been made to swallow a few mouthfuls of the Jamaica, which had somewhat recovered him, though he looked about him vacantly, with blood-shot eyes, and seemed still very much stupefied. Porgy was disposed to be indulgent, and prepared to wait on the fellow for his revelations; but Millhouse thought this was altogether a mistaken pity. He looked out impatiently into the west, where the sun, himself no longer visible, was glinting the forest tops with faint horizontal fires.

"I'm a-thinking, cappin, we hain't got too much time to be wasting on this here rapscallion! Ef he's got to speak, let him speak! He kin make the music, or he kaint! Another h'ist will bring it out of him, I reckon. We've got a good eight miles to ride, and we'll be in the night."

Porgy looked at the outlaw forbearingly. The fellow had evidently suffered a good deal, and was still suffering, though his glances showed that he had fully understood all that had been said, and was not now insensible to his danger. He felt that Millhouse, at all events, a hard old soldier, was in downright earnest; and he might reasonably conclude that his suggestion would, in the end, influence the decision of his superior.

"It will not need many words," said Porgy. "We can ride in the night, sergeant, I think. We've done it a thousand times before, in worse weather, and with home much farther off. Nay, with no home at all to go to! Give the poor devil a chance to recover. We may have to hang him after all. But I hope not. He has had a strong taste of the tree, that last trial; and has probably come to his senses. Give him the needful time to get his wits together. When he does speak, it is only to answer some half-dozen questions, which will hardly need as many sentences. Meanwhile, let some of the boys be getting our horses ready."

Frampton gave the necessary orders, and two or three of the negroes proceeded to this duty. The horses captured from the outlaws were among the objects of their care. While they were thus employed, and Porgy and his companions waiting, with more or less impatience, upon the slowy recovering outlaw, how did the squatter, Bostwick, employ himself? His interest in the progress of the affair, we may be sure, has undergone no diminution. The proceedings, which we have thus far detailed, were all as evident to his understanding as they were apparent to his sight. He had beheld the sufferings of Norris, with feeling for which he could not easily find words; not pity exactly —the sentiment was one not likely to penetrate his bosom— but gratitude perhaps; at all events, with a conviction that the degree of endurance which the outlaw was required to show, was quite as important to *his* safety—though more remotely— as to that of the sufferer himself. Anxiety, the more predominant feeling, was naturally mixed up, accordingly, with a certain annoying sense of self-reproach, which gave bitterness to his moods, and made him eager to be doing something which might employ his rage against the persecutors of his colleague. Even this sort of feeling, of mixed anxiety and rage, changed to

absolute terror when he saw the culprit let down from the tree for the *first* time. Had he then consented to reveal his secret? Was he already frightened from his propriety? Beyond the torture of the process, Bostwick readily persuaded himself that there was no real danger to the victim. He had seen, from the slow and gradual manner in which the executioners worked, that the purpose was neither to strangle him nor to break his neck! When let down, accordingly, he rationally conjectured that this was done only to receive his confession. Such a conviction naturally filled his soul with fear. His brain throbbed. He advanced nervously, some ten steps nearer, with the most desperate impulses; but paused—relieved, in some degree, when he saw the executioner resume his cruel toils, and saw the culprit reascending. But his fears were aroused anew when, a second time, he saw him let down to the earth. A new relief was brought him when, a *third* time, he beheld the struggling figure of his comrade depending in empty air. The selfish nature of the ruffian actually rejoiced in the sufferings, so well endured, of the miserable wretch, as they seemed to promise him security for his secrets—as they testified to the hardy courage of the sufferer, and seemed to declare his determination to suffer the last extremities rather than betray his pledges, even to associates so unworthy of such fidelity. He could value this virtue in another, as it told for his own security. With a husky chuckle, he kept repeating to himself as he beheld the spectacle—

"Oh! he's all flint and iron! He's close as an eyester! You can't prize his jaws open, and make his tongue wag, however you kin fix it! Norris is a glorious chap. He's true blue! I always know'd him for a man! He'll die game! with a stiff upper lip! Poor Dick! Ef I *could* only help you, wouldn't you see the fur fly!"

Then, as he beheld the dangling figure again going up, he almost cried aloud—

"Hold on awhile longer, Dick! Hold on, and they'll hev' to give it up! *Shet* [shut] your teeth fast, Dick—jes' stand to it now, this one time, and they'll let you off. It's only to scare the truth out of you; but don't be scared; and I'm h[illegible] to save you at the right time."

And, as if his comrade could hear every syllable he said, he proceeded with whispered assurances of succor.

"They'll carry you off to Porgy's house, and I'll follow. They ain't got no lock-up. I'll be close ahind them. I'll watch the proper chance for cutting in, and getting you out. It's only a sharp eye, and a light foot, and a bold heart, and a keen knife, and, maybe, a quick bullet, and we kin git you out of the hands of any one they puts to watch over you; and I'm here, a free man still, to help you, Dick; and you knows me, Dick—ou knows Bostwick—he never desarts a friend so long as life's him. Close, Dick, and don't you be scared!"

ad all this, though spoken in a whisper, or at most a murvas accompanied with a restless, eager action, as if every could reach the ears of the victim, and every movement caker was apparent to his eyes. The encouragement .en was really meant to reassure himself. For a mo-, although the sweat covered his face and neck, it seemed o have the effect. His manner became calmer—his eye more steady—and with even step he stole back to the sheltering place from which he had advanced.

But when, the *third* time, he beheld the culprit swing aloft—when the distress of the victim was observed to be greater than before—when his hands were seen to work and twist, even in their gyves, and the legs were convulsively thrown out with spasmodic action—and the forms below were observed to be more than usually attentive, while the extended hand of Porgy seemed to promise indulgent mercy; and when, a moment after, the outlaw was let down suddenly, supported tenderly beneath the tree, and liquor brought to refresh him: then, the apprehensions of the squatter obtained full ascendency. He then knew all his danger. He felt that the revelation was about to be made. He understood the terms of mercy. He saw that the prisoner was let down, and those attentions shown him, only because of his promise of confession; and though, from the spot where he stood, he heard not a word that was spoken, he yet understood the new relations of the parties as thoroughly as if himself one of the nearest bystanders. His opinion of his comrade changed instantly from the favorable one which he had so recently expressed.

"The mean, miserable skunk!" he exclaimed. "He couldn't grin and keep it in, like a man! Ef I was only nigh him jes' to drive my knife into his jaws! The poor, mean, cowardly beast, with no more sperrit than a spider! But he mus'n't tell! Lord G—d! he mus'n't tell! He must shet up for ever. Ef he speaks, I'm gone! Let me see. They've lifted him again! Thar he stands up afore the inimy. I could put a bullet through jacket of either of them; but what's the use? I could kill one of 'em, I reckon; but that wouldn't help him! The niggers is there, and they've got we'pons too; and, with the other two white men, they'd soon be upon him, and finish him. They'd be upon me, too;" but—looking around him—"I reckon 'twould be a cold trail they'd have a'ter me! I could put swamp enough a-tween us to laugh at all their s'arching. What's to be done? It *must* be done! Lord ha' mercy upon you, Dick Norris—you're a most bloody fool! But ef you're coward enough to blab, I ain't fool enough to let you, ef I kin help it."

The squatter now advanced a few paces. He moved confidently, as if his policy had been fully determined upon. He surveyed his ground very narrowly—saw that he had space for a run—calculated nicely the distance of the swamp thicket—the proximity of the cypress tree—the shelters, severally, of the gall and hurrah-bushes—and then deliberately wiped the perspiration from his brows with his sleeve. His head was stretched forward, as if, at the distance of a hundred yards or more, he could hear anything that was spoken, and in this attitude he appeared to listen. He seemed certainly disposed to wait a while on the proceedings of the partisans.

Meanwhile the outlaw, Norris, was recovering.

"You feel easier now, my good fellow," said Porgy, "and we've given you every indulgence. You've had time enough. Tell your story now; say who are your accomplices; who set you on this expedition, and what were its precise objects. A clean breast of it, my man, if you would hope for mercy; or you are run up for the last time!"

"I'll tell you all!" said Norris, utterly broken down.

"Good!" answered Porgy. "The sooner you set about it the better; for though really willing to wait upon you, and be

as indulgent as possible, time won't suffer it. We can't afford to lose the daylight; we must ride."

"Well, I'll tell you," began the outlaw. "There was six of us, you must know. We was got together in Charleston for this—"

Here he stopped suddenly, perforce. He was not permitted another syllable—arrested, at the very opening of his revelations, by a stroke, as if from the very bolt of fate. A rifle-bullet was in his brain! The report of the rifle and the effect of the shot were one. The victim was falling forward, among the group of listeners, at the very moment when the report of the gun was heard. The bullet was aimed with the truest skill. It had bored its way through the forehead, a little over the eyes, the region above both of which it completely traversed. The miserable wretch was dead before he fell!

A moment after, and Bostwick wheeled about for the swamp. He had but few words more of soliloquy.

"It had to be done, Dick Norris! Ef you had to speak for your life, I had to stop you for mine! I would ha' saved you, but you wouldn't let me! I'm mighty sorry, but it had to be done!"

The swamp thicket received him a moment after.

CHAPTER XXVII.

HOW THE FOX DOUBLES, WHILE THE HOUNDS PURSUE.

It would be much more easy to imagine than to describe the confusion which ensued among our partisans and their followers by this unexpected catastrophe within their circle. For a moment all seemed paralyzed. The event was so strange, so startling, and so utterly unaccountable, particularly supposing it to be the act of one of the outlaws. Porgy was the first to recover, and to conceive the motive for the murder by the fellow's colleague. He started up, and cried aloud—

"One hundred guineas to him who shall take the murderer alive!"

One hundred guineas! Our captain of partisans was a person of most magnificent ideas. Porgy had not, himself, seen such an amount of cash, in one heap, during the last seven years! We have already been advised of the very moderate amount in guineas which he bore away with him at the disbanding of the army. But our captain always spoke in round numbers, such as could roll off trippingly from the tongue. He might have been good for five guineas, and no doubt he would have given this number cheerfully, though it drained him of every copper that he had; but a hundred! He laughed, somewhat bitterly, a moment after, at the audacity of his own imagination.

But it did not need any reward, so soon as the party had sufficiently recovered their faculties, to stimulate their pursuit of the murderer. But there was a decided pause for a brief space after the event. The negroes, at first, were terribly alarmed; some crouched closely to the earth, while others were disposed to scatter themselves in flight. All but Tom, the cook, who was an old soldier, and Pomp, the fiddler, who, flattered by recent distinctions, was ambitious to prove himself a young one — were utterly paralyzed by their terrors. A gulf, opening suddenly beneath their feet, could not have more suddenly swallowed up their courage than did the unexpected bullet of Bostwick. But with the voice of Porgy they looked up. Its clear, trumpet-tones cheered them, and satisfied them that they were not all slain. He rose to his feet, with surprising agility, as he cried aloud, and found Lieutenant Lance Frampton already on the alert, while Sergeant Millhouse, without a word, after giving a single glance to the stiffening body of the outlaw, proceeded, at monstrous long strides, in the direction whence came the bullet of the living one. Tom, the cook, and Pomp, the fiddler, both caught up weapons and darted after Millhouse. Frampton dashed off, also, pursuing another route. The negroes now, generally, encouraged by these demonstrations, took heart, and followed in pursuit and search. They were all more or less provided with weapons, which had been taken from the outlaws.

"Scatter yourselves, boys! scatter if you would search and

be safe!" was the cry of Porgy. He, too, was in motion, with an agility really astonishing in his case. He caught up sword and pistols in the twinkling of an eye, and started off at a moderate trot to gain the tree where his horse—that which he had taken from one of the slain outlaws—was fastened to a swinging limb. But he was not destined to reach it so easily, or in so short a space of time as he had allotted himself. He had forgotten certain embarrassments in his own case—forgotten that he had, in order to the more easy administration of justice, ungirthed and unbuttoned himself, when taking his seat under the royal oak. He was suddenly restored to recollection on this subject, and brought to an abrupt stand, by feeling himself fettered, with his nether garments clinging about his legs. The circumstances in which he found himself were utterly indescribable, but it will not be difficult to conjecture them. He was only brought to a full consciousness of his embarrassment by nearly measuring his full length upon the ground.

"What a devil of a fix!" quoth he, soliloquizing. "Were I now to hear the cry which aroused the Hebrew wrestler—'The Philistines are upon thee, Samson!' what should I do? I should be shot, and sabred, and scalped, before I could steady my legs for decently falling to the ground! I should go over in a heap like a bushel of terrapins! And what a figure I should make upon the earth! How dreadfully exposed! A most shameful condition for 'man and soldier!'"

And thus speaking, he deliberately laid down sword and pistols, and, looking about him cautiously, proceeded to draw up his inexpressibles, and to button, and belt up—a performance less easy than necessary.

"It's well the war is over," quoth he, as he labored to contract his waistbands over his enormous waste of waist, and to bring the strap and buckle of his belt to bear. "I am no longer fit for war. It's wonderful that I've escaped so long and so well! With such a territory to take care of, it's perfectly surprising there have been so few trespassers! I could not always have kept them off! They would have overcome me at last! They might have caught me at some such awkward moment, in some such awkward fix, as the present! Ah!.. There! It is done at last! The wilderness is under fence at last!"

And he breathed long and heavily, after such severe exertion! But he wasted no more time than was necessary. Porgy was no loiterer when duty was to be done. He skulked no task, shirked no obligations; and hence his greater merit, inclining, naturally, as he did, to the creature comforts, and a selfish desire for repose and luxury. He now reached his horse, and mounted in a few moments. He was a good horseman. It was much easier to raise than to lower himself—easier to get into the saddle, than to subside upon his leafy couch on the earth. Once in the saddle, he was a hard rider! The steed that carried him had a great deal to bear besides his weight. He used the spur freely, and was never more liberal in its use than now, when required to make up for lost time. Headlong, he drove into the thick cover of the forest, and for the swamp-fastnesses, where the outlaw, Bostwick, had taken refuge. Here, our partisan captain was soon found, making his way over log and through bog, in mire and water, through close thicket and tangled vine, in a wilderness from which the light was disappearing fast; and as far as horse could well go, where a career on horseback must be very soon arrested.

The pursuit was hotly urged. It was well that Bostwick had made his calculations so cunningly, and taken such deliberate precautions. He had to deal with old "swamp-suckers,"—hunters as keen and familiar with such places as himself. Had they been as well acquainted with this particular locality, he had never escaped. Nay, had there been one hour more of sunlight, his chances would have been very doubtful. As Porgy phrased it—

"But one inch of candle more, and we should have his hide."

As it was, the outlaw was more than once caught sight of in the chase. Millhouse once detected him, as a half-floating log turned with him in the water. Pompey cried out that he was going through the gall bushes in front; and Lance Frampton got a clear view of him, at long distance, crossing a tussock. He gave him both pistols as he sped—"bang! bang!" with scarce an interval between the two shots; but, at each fire, Bostwick was seen to duck his head instinctively; and, at length, he disappeared in a pond, rising up on the opposite side, amid a heap of drift wood. Here he paused, with his nose just out of water and lay still, as he thought he lay unseen.

And he was in a place of safety. Night had come to his relief. He could hear the cries of his pursuers, but could no longer see them, and he felt that he was secure. It only required that he should keep still. The sounds of pursuit finally ceased; his enemies had all disappeared; and, like a great Newfoundland dog, shivering all over, he raised himself out of the alligator hole which had harbored him, and stood, savage and gloomy, upon the neighboring bank; the owl hooted overhead from the blasted cypress, and the sad stars coming out, one by one, and looking down like so many mysterious sentinels in Heaven, watchers over the guilty course of man on earth.

Bostwick shivered, as he looked up, with superstition as well as cold. He had certainly, that day, received a fearful lesson of the vicissitudes and terrors which wait upon evil deeds! The way of the transgressor is indeed hard! His comrades gone; not one to be seen! How many of the five who had set out with him on this expedition, now breathed the air of life with him? He knew not, at that moment, of *one!* He had been baffled in the purpose he had in view. Had lost everything—even his rifle, which, in the hottest of the pursuit, he had been compelled to cast away. But one thing he had saved—the box of the widow Eveleigh, containing the fifty guineas, and the papers which M'Kewn so much desired! He had concealed this box in a hiding-place in the swamp above, which he had no fear would be discovered. This was consolation in the recollection of these fifty guineas. He had other consolations when he thought of the papers and M'Kewn! For the latter, his present situation filled him with new bitterness.

"D—n him!" he muttered to himself. "He shall pay well for them afore he gits them! He shall make up to me all my losses! He shall pay for these poor fellows, and what they suffered. There will be a sweet bill of it, which he shall foot up every shilling, or there shall be no peace for him on this airth!"

Let us leave him, cowering and cursing in the swamp, and return to the partisans. They gave up the chase only when they found it no longer possible to see. Lance Frampton picked up, and brought in, the outlaw's rifle, which they all examined closely, in the hopes to identify it; but they had none of them seen

it before in any hands. Three letters, evidently initials of a former owner's name, were cut rudely in the stock.

"M. T. C."

"Marcus Tullius Cicero!" quoth Porgy, very gravely.

"Who, captain? I never heard the name! Do you know him?" was the simple inquiry of the lieutenant.

"I ought to; for I received many a flogging, when a boy, that I might become intimate with him, and the old fellows he kept company with. And you may be sure the flogging did not make me love him or them any better! But I doubt if either Marcus or his companions owned this rifle. If they did, then the historians have suppressed many an interesting fact in science. But, let us push out of this wilderness, Lance, and get into the open road. Corporal, see to the negroes, and send them on ahead.—Let them get wood and have fire for us at least, when we reach home. It is getting monstrous chilly! Yes—we shall need a fire, even more than supper!"

Supper, indeed! thought Porgy. It was his philosophy only which preferred the fire.

Obedience was now pleasure. The whole party was well tired of the fruitless pursuit, and all began to feel the chillness of which the captain complained—and the hunger also, of which he did not think it necessary to complain.

"See that the negroes cover the dead bodies with leaves, Lance, until to-morrow, when we must borrow shovels from Mrs. Eveleigh, and have them buried. The buzzard and wild-cat will hardly find them in one night"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE OLD SOLDIER RETURNS TO A RUINED HOMESTEAD.

All was done as had been commanded. Tom's world of kitchen and camp baggage was fairly divided among the negroes, all of whom were now mounted on the captured horses of the outlaws, some of them riding double. The dead bodies were hidden away beneath the forest leaves and branches, as closely as it could possibly be done. The odds and ends of the party were carefully picked up; not a tin pan suffered to escape inquiry; and, under the growing starlight, the negroes took up the line of march, as a sort of advance, with Tom, the cook, for guide and leader; Porgy, Frampton, and Millhouse following at a less rapid pace. Of these three, the two latter were suffered to lead the way, our captain of partisans seeming disposed to linger in a manner that surprised Millhouse, who made it a subject of comment to his companion.

Frampton, through the sympathies which he entertained for his superior, could well understand the reason of his apparent apathy. Without much logic or knowledge—without being much a student of human nature—the genial temper of Frampton had taught him to conjecture the peculiar mood which now troubled the partisan. Besides, he had been enlightened measurably, that day, on the subject of Porgy's secret cares, by the long conversation between them which has been already reported, and, through which, the lieutenant had found clews to the captain's nature and difficulties, such as his buoyant temper had never before suffered him to betray. That the latter should now hesitate—now that he was almost at his own threshold—did not greatly surprise the youth, and rëawakened all his sympathies for his chief. He might well linger on the route, loath to approach scenes so precious once, so full of dear recollections, but now so full of gloomy aspects and discouraging auguries. From Porgy's own description, there could be no prospect half

so cheerless as that of the ancient homestead which was about to receive him. Memory and thought might well be painfully busy in his mind. The one recalled a past which was full of sunshine and promise. The other reproached him with a profligacy which had measurably cast fortune from his arms; and bitterly rehearsed the recent history, in which events seemed to have studiously aided to consummate the ruin which his own erring youth had begun. The journey, from the camp of Marion, at the head of Cooper river, and which was now to terminate upon the Ashepoo, had afforded prospects, all along the route, well calculated to give the gloomiest color to the mind of the observer. Of this journey, we can not afford a better idea than to copy from Moultrie's memoirs, a few passages descriptive of what *he* saw, in a neighboring district of country, about the same period—in fact, the preceding summer—on his own return to his estates, which had suffered in like manner with most others.

"Soon after my being exchanged," writes the old general, "I prepared to set off, with my family, for South Carolina, and, early in April, left Philadelphia, and arrived at Waccamaw, in South Carolina; where I was informed that General Greene's army lay at Ashley river, quite inactive, and no military operation going on. I remained at Winyaw till late in September, at which time I paid a visit to General Greene. It was the most dull, melancholy, dreary ride that any one could possibly take, of about one hundred miles, through the woods of that country, which I had been accustomed to see abound with live stock, and wild fowl of every kind. It was now destitute of all. It had been so completely chequered by the different armies, that, not a part of it had been left unexplored; consequently, not a vestige of horses, cattle, hogs or deer, &c., was to be found. The squirrels and birds of every kind were totally destroyed. The dragoons told me, that, on their scouts, no living creature was to be seen, except a few camp-scavengers (turkey-buzzards) picking the bones of some unfortunate fellows, who had been cut or shot down, and left in the woods above ground. . . . . My plantation I found to be a desolate place; stock of every kind taken off; the furniture carried away, and my estate had been under sequestration."

This individual picture was equally true of all the country;

and the condition of Moultrie's estate, that of every man who had distinguished himself on either side, whether for, or against the revolutionary struggle. Very many had fared even worse —their negroes being wholly carried off, and their dwellings destroyed by fire. Though but a captain in the brigade of Marion, Porgy had been honored by a fair share of British hostility. His home, he knew, had escaped the torch of the incendiary, but his negroes had been stolen, and the plantation utterly laid waste. We have already seen what special additional causes of anxiety were at work to make him moody. Debt hung upon his fortunes like an incubus; and he possessed no conscious resources, within himself, by which to restore his property, or even to acquire the means of life. He rode forward, gloomy and comfortless, in spite of all his philosophy, scarcely exchanging a word with his companions.

Meanwhile, his negroes, under Tom's guidance, eager once more to regain their old homes, sped on, at a smart canter, which soon left their superiors behind. It was after ten o'clock at night, when the lights from a score of wild, gleaming torches, wavering in air, announced the approach to the avenue of "Glen-Eberly," which was the name of Porgy's ancient homestead—so named after a goodly grandmother by whom it had been entailed on her brother's children. Our captain of partisans was aroused to a consciousness of external things, by the loud shouts of the negroes who had preceded him, and who now hailed his approach after a fashion such as Moultrie describes in the same narrative from which we have already quoted.

"T'ank de Lord, here's maussa *git* to he own home at last! —Bress de Lord, Maussa, you come! We all *berry* glad *for* see you, maussa—glad *too* much!"

And the same negroes who had been with him for several hours before, without so much as taking his hand, now rushed up and seized it, with loud cries, as if they were hosts, and welcoming a favorite guest. The tears stood in the eyes of our captain, though he suffered none of his companions to behold them; and he shook hands with, and spoke to them each in turn—few words, indeed, but they were uttered tremulously, and in low tones.

Fordham, the overseer of Mrs. Eveleigh, now made his appearance from the house. The wagon had departed, having left the supplies as the good widow had ordered. Porgy entered his house expecting to find it empty and cheerless. He was gratefully confounded to see the goods, blankets, drink, provisions, all around the hall, and shown to the best advantage under the ruddy gleams of a rousing fire in the chimney.

"Ah!" said he, "Fordham, Mrs. Eveleigh is a very noble lady. Make her my best respects and thanks. I shall soon ride over and make them in person."

"Well, my friends," said he to Frampton and Millhouse, when Fordham had departed, "I felt doubtful how to provide you your supper to-night; though, knowing this excellent lady as I did, I should not have doubted that she would contribute largely to it. See what she has done! Here are sugar and coffee; here are meal and bacon; here is a cheese; here—but look about you, and say what we shall have for supper. Supper we must have! I am famishing. Tom! Tom! where the d—l is that fellow! Does he think that he's free of *me*, because he's free of the army?—Tom! Tom!"

"Sah! yer, maussa! Wha' de debbil mek' [makes] you *holler* so loud, maussa, when I's jis' [just] at your elbow? You t'ink I hard o' hearing, 'cause I got hard maussa, I 'spose!"

"Hard maussa, you impertinent scamp! Another master would have roasted you alive long before this. See, and let us have something, in the twinkling of an eye. Look among these provisions, that Mrs. Eveleigh has sent us, and take out enough to give us all a good feed—*niggers* and all!"

"Miss Ebleigh! *He's* a bressed [blessed] woman, for sartin, for sen' we all sich good t'ings; de berry t'ings we bin want; and jis' when we want 'em. He's a mos' 'spectable pusson, is dat Miss Ebleigh. Ki! He's a'mos' [almost] ebbry t'ing for gem*p*leman supper! Kah, me! dis da cheese, in dis tub! Pomp, you son ob a snail! why you day? Yer! [here] open dem bundle wha' b'long to me, in de piazza! bring fanner [a shallow winnowing basket] and bring bucket you will see day [there]. Hab out de t'ree knife and de four fork, for maussa, when he got comp'ny. See a'ter de hom'ny pot; and de coffee-pot; and look up some water for wash dem! Dere's no

kitchen, maussa; he all bu'n down. We hab for cook do supper in de house, yer, or, maybe, we kin find fireplace down stairs in de brick part. Go see, Pomp—and Pomp, sen' out some of dem nigger for git lightwood, and bring water and udder t'ings."

We allow Tom to be thus prolix, not simply because he was so permitted by his master, but as he gives us a very correct idea of the condition of household affairs. The kitchen, as he states, was destroyed; the cooking was finally decreed to be carried on in the brick basement of the house hereafter, but, for this night, Tom made free with the fireplace of the *salle à manger*. The house was an ample one, of wood, on a brick basement. But it had been completely gutted. There was neither table nor chair; and our friends couched themselves upon the blankets of Mrs. Eveleigh, spread about the fireplace; and, accustomed as they had been to still harder, if not humbler seats, upon the naked ground, were not seriously conscious of any privations. Thus sitting, or reclining, they waited in comparative silence the preparations which Tom was making for supper.

That sable kitchen-despot had found employment for all the negroes, Pompey acting as a sort of lieutenant or orderly. Water and wood, in any quantity, were soon provided. Soon, the hominy was set to boil; the coffee-pot began to smoke; while the "hoe" and "johnny" cakes, spread upon sections of barrel heads, four or five in number, were seen facing the now brightly blazing fire. The chimney-place of the dining-room, though not quite so ample as that of a Southern plantation kitchen, was yet one of sufficiently large dimensions. What with the hominy and coffee-pots, the bread stuffs, and the frying-pan, hissing with broad but tender slices of ham—which the fork of the grand cuisinier shifted from side to side, as the occasion seemed to require—there was little space left in the premises, and no room suffered near them for mere idlers: in which rank, at this moment, we may consider the captain, himself, and his two companions in arms. But the fire was sufficient to warm the room, the shutters being closed in, though there was not a pane of glass left in one of the sashes. If the whites of the group were silent, Tom was not. The benefactions o

Mrs. Eveleigh afforded him an ample theme for talk; and, while he stirred the hominy, and turned the ham and the hoe cakes, and pushed up the fire—keeping Pompey busy all the while—he maintained a running commentary on the blessings of life in the neighborhood of such an excellent woman—a woman so well conversant with her duties to her neighbors.

"Dis is fus' [first] rate *ole* bacon, maussa, dat Miss Ebleigh sen' we! And de grits [grist] is de bes' flint; an' dis flour white like snow; and sich a bowl of coffee, as I guine gibe you to-night, wid sich sugar, you ain't bin see dis fibe, t'ree, seben years, maussa! Lord be praise, for all he mussies! When I bin riding 'long yer to-night, coming to we ole home, I bin say to myself, all 'long de way, wha' de debbil we guine fin' home yer for supper to-night! Enty I know, dem d—n British and tory bin skin de plantation ob ebbry t'ing? Hah! I say, der' will be heap o' growling 'tomachs yer to-night! An' I t'ink of de cole [cold] and de starbation, 'till I begin to shibber all ober like new sodger, jis when de inimy begin for shoot! But, de Lord be praise! Der's no cole, der's no 'tarbation! Yer's ebbry t'ing for las' we niggars, and you gemplemens mos' t'ree week!"

Tom had calculated nicely, as well as an experienced commissariat could have done. He had an eye to a man's dimensions. He continued:—

"Time 'nough t'ree week from now to consideration how for git more supper: and der's no knowing wha' guine tu'n [turn] up, in dat time, for gib us more hom'ny and bacon. De Lord is wid us! An' maussa, you ain't bin see dis bag o' rice, a good bushel I reckon, dat Miss Ebleigh bin sen' wid dem udder t'ings. Hab a pot o' rice to-morrow!"

Tom, when he declared it time enough to consider how to procure more food when the present supplies were fairly exhausted, dealt in genuine negro philosophy. Sambo seldom troubles himself to look out for the morrow. His doctrine somewhat tallied with that of Scripture. Instead of—"sufficient for the day, the evil thereof," he read, "sufficient for the day, the good thereof." Foresight and forethought are his remarkable deficiencies. He never houses his harvest in anticipation of the storm.

There was one virtue in Tom's philosophies. They never embarrassed, or delayed him, in his duties and performances; and it was not very long before he made the grateful annunciation to the hungering troopers that supper was ready to be served. Then followed the bustle. Then was Pomp conspicuous as head waiter, while Tom, as if satisfied with his share of the performance, already executed, drew up a keg to the fireside, and leisurely seated himself as a spectator—ready to take up the smoking dishes from the fire as soon as the cloth should be spread to receive them; but in no other way interested in the performance!

CHAPTER XXIX.

HOW A SUPPER MAY TAKE AWAY A DRAGOON'S APPETITE.

"WHY you no spread de table-clot', Pomp?" was the snappish demand of Tom, seeing the other hesitate.

"I no see no clot' uncle Tom," replied the bewildered fiddler.

"Enty blanket is clot', you son ob a skunk! Is you lib so long in de worl', dat you neber l'arn wha' one t'ing is, and wha' nodder t'ing is—wha' is wood, and wha' is clot'! I reckon, boy, when we calls you to eat you' own supper, you wunt ax ef it's *dut* [dirt] you mus' eat, or hom'ny."

Pomp, humbled by his rebuke, possessed himself of one of the blankets, from the pile sent by the widow, but he still stood vacantly looking about the apartment.

"Well," quoth our major domo, "wha' you 'tan' [stand] for, sucking in de whole room wid your eyes?"

"I no see any table, uncle Tom!"

"Don't you uncle me, you chucklehead! Lay de table on de floor! Who could b'lieb dat a pusson could lib so long and grow so big, and nebber l'arn nutting! Ha! boy, you bin in de army, you'd ha' l'arn all sort of t'ing at de sharp p'int ob de baggnet! De army's de place for mek' man ob sense out ob fool. Ax de gempleman's to git out ob de way, so you kin

spread de table-clot'; dough gemplemans ought to hab sense 'nough, hese'f, for moob [move] widout axing!"

"Hear that impudent rascal!" quoth Porgy, moving good-naturedly, his example followed by Frampton and Millhouse. "Was ever fellow so completely spoiled?"

"I nebber *spile* supper, maussa!" responded Tom, with a toss of the head, as if to say—"nobody knows my qualities better than yourself."

"No, indeed, Tom, and you presume on your merits, somewhat to their injury; but you will be taken down, you scamp, when you are required to find and hunt up the supper, as well as cook it."

"Ha! but you see, maussa, my business is cook—I knows um! It's maussa business to fin' de *bittle* [victuals]. Put de meat and bread yer, whay I kin put out my han' and git 'em, leff it to me to hab 'em ready for eat; but da's all I hab a right for do."

"Ah! indeed, my buck; but I'll persuade you, at the end of a hickory, that you have other rights."

"Wha' maussa; hick'ry for Tom! Nebber! Anybody else bin tell me sich a t'ing, I say, widout guine to be sassy—'he's a d—n fool for he trouble.'"

"Hear the fellow! Sergeant, do you want a negro—a cook?"

"I'll thank you, cappin, very much. Tom and myself agree very well together. I like his fries monstrous."

"You shall have him—when I'm done with him."

"You nebber guine done wid Tom, maussa! I 'tick to you ebbrywhere; you comp'ny good 'nough for Tom in any country, no matter whay you go."

"Thank you, Tom; but Tom, if you don't clap a hot iron to Pomp's haunches, he'll never have supper on table to-night."

"De boy will be de deat' ob me!" cried Tom, starting up, and administering a sudden whack to the ear of Pomp, with the flat of an amazingly rough hand. The lad reeled under the salutation. Pompey was more dexterous at the violin, than in the capacity of a house-servant. He had no idea of the novel duties he was required to perform; and, jerking him by the collar to the fireplace, Tom clapped the several dishes into his hand,

and proceeded, with the expertness of a veteran, to guide everything to its proper place. Under his administration, the table was soon spread.

"Now you see, boy, how de t'ing is done. 'Member next time, or you'll see sights ob hickory, wid de twigs all growin' downwards. Now, tell de gemplemans dat supper is a-waitin'."

And Tom resumed his seat upon the keg by the fire. Pomp made the necessary signals, after a fashion of his own, and Porgy, letting himself down upon one corner of the blanket, which served as a table-cloth, invited his comrades in war to follow his example. They did not wait for a second invitation, but grouped themselves about the lowly board, occupying opposite places. Tom flung some fresh brands into the fire, which blazed up ruddily, throwing a strong light over the great hall, and showing, picturesquely, the group upon the floor, with Pomp in waiting, and several sooty faces peering in through one of the windows—from which a shutter had been torn—opening upon the piazza.

The equipments of the board were quite as picturesque as the group around them. The crockery closet of Captain Porgy being utterly empty, the hominy-pot, black and smoking as it was, had been lifted bodily from the fire, and now stood in the centre, resting upon a barrel-head, into which its three legs burned regular sockets. A pewter spoon was employed to scoop up its white and well-boiled contents. The coffee-pot, a battered vessel that had been in the wars, occupied a similar resting-place; while the fried bacon was handed round, by Pomp, to the several parties in a huge frying-pan, in which it had been "done to a turn." This vessel bore proof, also, of serious service, having more than one flaw in the sides, while one half of the handle had been carried away in actual conflict with the keen sabre of a British dragoon. The partisans helped themselves to meat and gravy, in turn, from this sooty vessel, which was then restored to the fireplace, the better to keep warm the residue of the bacon. The hoe-cake, broken into good-sized bits, was placed upon another section of a barrel-head, by the hands of Porgy himself. At the side of each stood his tin cup smoking with coffee, while the top of the coffee-pot was em

ployed to hold sugar, and stood, conveniently for the use of all, in the centre of the group.

Thus served, our partisans were by no means slow in their performances. The edge of appetite was keen. They worked vigorously. The taste of the meats improved the moods of all parties, and opened hearts as well as jaws. The fullness of the mouth prompted the heart to speech; and, in the enjoyment of things of the flesh. Porgy soon began to forget the anxieties of the spirit. He smacked his lips over the luscious ham, exclaiming:—

"This may be called good, Tom—very good: in fact, I never tasted better. You have certainly lost none of your talent in consequence of your leaving the army."

"I bin good cook 'fore I ebber see de army."

"So you were, Tom; but your taste was matured in the army; particularly on the Pedee. But you were better at a broil, I think, before the war."

"Tom's jest as good, I'm a-thinking, at a fry as at a brile, cappin," quoth Millhouse, licking his chaps, while elevating a huge slice of his bacon into sight, upon the prongs of his fork.

"An' why you no say *bile*, too, Mass Millh'us'?" demanded Tom, apparently not satisfied that there should be any implied demerits in his case.

"En [and] so I mout [might]," answered the sergeant. "This here hominy now, to my thinking, is *biled* to a monstrous softness."

"An' de bake—de bread—wha' you say for him?" was the next exaction of Tom's vanity; and he handed up, as he queried, a fresh supply, from the fire, of a crisp, well-browned "Johnny-cake"—an article, by the way, which is too often served up, of most villanous manufacture, particularly at a *modern* barbecue; but which, in those days, might usually be commended, and which, in Tom's hands, was an achievement—a *chef-d'œuvre* of kitchen art.

"Well, Tom, I kin say with a mighty cl'ar conscience, that this is raal, gennywine bread. I only wish Miss Ebeleigh was here now, herself, jest to try a taste of it."

"Ha!" quoth Tom, heaving up—"I 'speck [expect] ef he bin yer, he would nebber le' maussa res', tell he beg me from 'em. He would want you to gib me to um, I tell you, maussa!"

"Give you, Tom! Give you to anybody? No! no! old fellow! I will neither give you, nor sell you, nor suffer you to be taken from me in any way, by Saint Shadrach! who was your blessed father in the flesh, and from whom you inherit your peculiar genius for the kitchen! Nothing but death shall ever part us, and even death shall not if I can help it. When I die, you shall be buried with me. We have fought and fed too long together, Tom, and I trust we love each other quite too well, to submit to separation. When *your* kitchen fire grows cold, Tom, I shall cease to eat; and you, Tom, will not have breath enough to blow up the fire when mine is out! I shall fight for you to the last, Tom, and you, I know, would fight to the last for me, as I am very sure that neither of us can long outlast the other."

"Fight for you, maussa! Ha! Jes' le' dem tory try we, maussa!" responded Tom, quite excited, and shaking his head with a dire significance. But Tom did not exactly conceive the tenor of his master's speech, or the direction of his thoughts. He did not conjecture that the earnestness with which the latter spoke, had its origin in his recent meditations; and these had, regard to civil rather than military dangers—to the claws of the sheriff, rather than tory weapons! Once on this track, Porgy found relief in continuing, and in making himself better understood.

"They shall take *none* of you negroes, if I can help it! But they shall take *all* before they touch a hair of your head, Tom!"

"Da's it, maussa! I know you nebber guine part wid Tom!"

"Before they shall tear you from me, Tom——"

"Day [they] can't begin to come it, maussa! I 'tick to you, maussa, so long as fire bu'n!"

"But, it might be, Tom; the time might come; circumstances might arise; events might happen; I might be absent, or unable, and then, you might fall into the clutches of some of these d——d harpies, who take a malignant pleasure in making people uncomfortable. You have heard, Tom, of such an animal as a sheriff, or sheriff's deputy?"

"Enty I know? He's a sort of warmint! I knows 'em well! He come into de hen-house, cut chicken t'roat, drink de blood, and suck all de eggs! I know 'em, for sartain! Da him?"

"Yes, they are blood-suckers, and egg-suckers, and throat-cutters—that's true, Tom; vermin of the worst sort: but they still come in the shape of human beings. They are men after a fashion; men-weasels, verily, and they do the work of beasts! You will know them by their sly looks; their skulkings, peepings, watchings, and the snares they lay; by the great papers, with great seals, that they carry; and by their calling themselves sheriffs or constables, and speaking big about justice and the law. If any of you negroes happen to see any such lurking about the plantation, or within five miles, let me know. Don't let them lay hands on you, but make for the swamp, the moment they tell you 'stop.' You, Tom, in particular, beware of all such! Should they succeed in taking you, Tom—should I not be able to help you—should you find them carrying you off, to the city or elsewhere, to sell you to some other master——"

"Gor-a-mighty! maussa, wha' for you scare me so, t'inking ob sich t'ings?"

"Tom! sooner than have you taken off by these vermin, I will shoot you!"

"Me! shoot me! me, Tom! Shoot me, maussa!"

"Yes, Tom! you shall never leave me. I will put a brace of bullets through your abdomen, Tom, sooner than lose you! But, it may be, that I shall not have the opportunity. They may take advantage of my absence—they may *steal* you away—coming on you by surprise. If they should do so, Tom, I rely upon you to put *yourself* to death, sooner than abandon me and become the slave of another. Kill yourself, Tom, rather than let them carry you off. Put your knife into your ribs, anywhere, three inches deep, and you will effectually baffle the blood-hounds!"

"Wha', me, maussa! kill mese'f! Me, Tom! 'Tick knife t'ree inch in me rib, and dead! Nebber, in dis worl' [world] maussa! I no want for dead! I always good for cook! I good for fight—good for heap o' t'ing in dis life! No good 'nough for dead, maussa! No want for dead so long as der's plenty ob bile, and brile, and bake, and fry, for go sleep 'pon. Don't talk ob sich t'ing, maussa, jis' now, when de time is 'mos' [almost] come for me eat supper!"

"Tom!" exclaimed the captain of partisans, laying down his

knife and fork, and looking solemnly and sternly at the negro—"I thought you were more of a man—that you had more affection for me Is it possible that you could wish to live, if separated from me? Impossible, Tom! I will never believe it. No, boy, you shall never leave me. We shall never part. You shall be my cook, after death, in future worlds, even as you are here. Should you suffer yourself to survive me, Tom—should you be so hard-hearted—I will haunt you at meal-time always. Breakfast, dinner, supper—at every meal—you shall hear my voice. I will sit before you as soon as the broil is ready, and you shall always help me first!"

The negro looked aghast. Porgy nodded his head solemnly.

"Remember! It shall be as I have said. If you are not prepared to bury yourself in the same grave with me when I die, I shall be with you in spirit, if not in flesh; and I shall make you cook for me as now. At breakfast you will hear me call out for ham and eggs, or a steak; at dinner, perhaps, for a terrapin stew; at supper, Tom—when all is dark and dreary, and there is nobody but yourself beside the fire—I shall cry out, at your elbow, 'My coffee, Tom!' in a voice that shall shake the very house!"

"Oh, maussa! nebber say sich t'ing! Ef you promise sich t'ing, you hab for come!"

"To be sure;—so you see what you have to expect if you dare to survive me!"

Tom turned gloomily to the fire, not a little bewildered. The bravest negro is the slave of superstitious fancies, and Tom was a devout believer in ghosts, and quite famous in the kitchen for his own ghost experience.

"But to your own supper now, with what appetite you may, and see that you feed the other negroes. I see that *we* have all supped."

"Lor'-a-mighty, maussa, you tek' 'way all me appetite for supper."

"You will soon enough find it, I fancy," quoth Porgy, coolly, as he lighted his pipe. Millhouse followed the example, and, accompanied by Lieutenant Frampton, the two adjourned to the piazza, leaving the field to the negroes, who, at a given signal, rushed eagerly in to the feast.

CHAPTER XXX.

SERGEANT MILLHOUSE DISCUSSES THE POLICY OF CAPTAIN PORGY.

It has been said that the homestead of the old soldier was entirely swept of furniture. In emerging from the hall to the piazza, Porgy and his followers were without a chair upon which to sit. They paced the piazza, accordingly, puffing as they went. The floor of it shook beneath their steps. It needed repair. The bannisters were gone. The boards were half decayed. The steps by which they ascended to the house "were ticklish to the last degree," to employ the phrase of Porgy himself. The latter paused in his paces.

"This won't do," said he. "To smoke is to contemplate. Contemplation implies calm, repose, and an easy position for the body. With the pipe in my mouth, I must sit or lie. Let us go out and sit by that fire, boys."

The negroes had kindled a fire within fifty feet of the house, and on one side of the avenue. It was the customary camp-fire to the old soldiers, and there was no reluctance declared or felt to the proposition of the captain of partisans. He led the way, accordingly, and, with a grunt and some effort, let himself down beside the blaze. New brands were supplied by Frampton, and himself and Millhouse subsided upon the ground also, at respectful distances from their superior. Here they crouched for a while. Supper had done its work, in inducing a certain feeling of sluggishness. Change of circumstance was productive also of a mood which inclined rather to musing than to speech. The thoughts of all were more or less busy. The subject of Porgy's speculations may be easily conjectured. Those of Millhouse are not less easily definable, but they involved few anxieties on his own account. Lance Frampton was a young lover, who felt every hour an age which kept him away from

his rustic beauty. Of course his head and heart were filled with her image. Not that he had not other thoughts more proper to his immediate associations. His was a spirit of generous sympathies, and, spite of all Porgy's selfishness of character, the young man, through an intercourse of three years, had learned to love and honor him for the really good points in his nature in spite of its egotism. He mused quite as much upon the fortunes of his superior as upon his own.

For a time, accordingly, all were busy brooding each after his own fashion, and all silent. The pipes sent forth their volumes, adding not a little to the cloudy atmosphere by which they were surrounded. The night was dark and raw, without being really cold. The winds were low, and faintly sighed through the too scanty bit of wood which lay between our group and the north. The prospect promised rain by morning. The weight of the atmosphere was felt, and, pressing back the smokes of the fire, kept the party enveloped in a white shroud of mist and vapor. A melancholy stillness overspread the scene, and the ear felt oppressed, as well as the eye, by the uniform absence of all provocation from without. Not a star was to be seen. A solid wall seemed to shut in the circle within thirty yards; and inside of this circuit nothing was visible but the skeleton outlines of the trees, and the vague, faint white of the dwelling-house. Our party felt the gloom of the prospect. The captain and sergeant puffed with all their vigor, and very soon replenished their pipes. The former at length broke silence.

"We are to have rain by the morning; but this must not prevent us from putting those rascals out of sight"—(meaning the outlaws who had been slain). "You must give instructions, Lance, to one of the negroes, to set off by daylight to Mrs. Eveleigh, and borrow spades and shovels, or hoes, for the purpose of burying them. I doubt if such things are to be found anywhere on this place. After that, Lance, I suspect you will desire to ride over and visit the widow Griffin. It will be a day's visit only, I suspect, and you will be back at night. But that's just as you and they think proper. Of course, you know, my boy, that so long as I have house-room and enough for supper, you shall share it. When you are married, you shall still do as you please. You may bring your wife here, if it suits you, and

her mother too. At all events, here is your home, so long as it is mine."

"Thank you, kindly, captain; and I hope you'll keep your plantation for ever. I expect to work for you here until I'm married, and after that we'll see. I reckon Mrs. Griffin will want Ellen and me to live with her when we are married, and to manage her little place."

"That is, if she herself does not marry."

"Oh! I don't think she's going to do that. She was mighty fond of her husband."

"Y-e-s!" quoth Porgy, taking out his pipe, and emptying the ashes. "Y-e-s! it may be so—and yet the widow is tolerably young, fresh, and good-looking. A dead husband is of no sort of use in this world, and that is the present question. When I have smoked out my pipe, and emptied the ashes, I am apt, after a little pause, to fill it with fresh tobacco. He who has smoked one pipe, will be apt to try another, and another, as long as he can smoke. That is, if the first has not sickened him. That the widow has found one husband grateful, is good reason why she should try another. Mrs. Griffin is a woman of sense, and has too many good qualities to remain single. She is a good housekeeper—everything is in trim about her. She takes care of everything, and herself neat. Besides, she makes a first-rate terrapin stew, quite as good as Tom; and her broil and fry will pass muster in any camp. I remember the blue cat, which she gave us on the Edisto, with a relish even now; and that reminds me, by the way, that we must get hooks and lines ready for the Ashepoo pretty soon. We shall have the spring upon us before we get our tackle ready."

"I'm a-thinking, cappin," said Millhouse, "that you'll have to be seeing about something besides blue cat and fishing lines. You'll want ploughs and hoes sooner than anything else. These niggers must go to work, mighty soon, ef I'm to have the managing of 'em."

"You, Millhouse! Do you mean to volunteer as overseer?"

"Don't I! I reckon that's pretty much all I'm good for. But it's lucky I do know something of rice planting; and I was never a slouch at making corn. I'm for breaking up land

and going to work, without so much as axing your leave or blessing."

"You shall do as you please, old fellow, for I don't know that I can teach you anything in these matters. I was always one of that large class of planters who reap thistles from their planting. I sowed wheat only to reap tares. I never had luck in planting."

"That's because you never trusted to luck, cappin. You was always a-thinking to do something better than other people, and you wouldn't let nater [nature] alone. You was always a-hurrying nater, tell you wore her out; jest like those foolish mothers who give their children physic—dose after dose—one dose fighting agin the other, and nara [neither] one gitting a chance to work. Now, I'm a-thinking that the true way is to put the ground in order, and at the right time plant the seed, and then jest lie by, and look on, and see what the warm sun and the rain's guine to do for it. But you, I reckon, warn't patient enough to wait. You was always for pulling up the corn to see if it had sprouted; and for planting over jest when it was beginning to grow. I've known a many of that sort of people, pr*e*ticklarly among you wise people, and gentlemen born. It ain't reasonable to think that a man kin find new wisdom about everything; and them sort of people who talk so fine, and strange, and sensible, in a new way, about the business that has been practised ever since the world begun, they're always overdoing the business, and working agin nater. They're quite too knowing to give themselves a chance."

"That's philosophy, Millhouse."

"No, cappin, 'tain't philosophy, but it's mighty good sense. I kin make corn, and rice, I reckon, jest as good as any man; and you must leave it all to me. I'll work it all out, and you mus'n't meddle, cappin, except to do jest them things that I tell you."

"Good! I like that! I feel that I should greatly improve under a good sense keeper."

"'Zackly, cappin; that's the very thing you've been awanting all your life. Now, I've hearn you tell, how you used, when a-planting these same rice lands of your'n, to let the water off of the fields to catch the fish, ef so be some of your friends hap-

pen'd to come and dine with you. Sp'ile a whole field of fine rice, jest flooded, to catch a few *pairch!*"

"Ah! but, Millhouse, they were such beauties! You never saw such perch in your life."

"I reckon I've seed as fine pairch as ever you caught, cappin. But that ain't the thing, no how. Ef they were as fine fish as ever grow'd in water, it was a sin and shame to spile the rice to catch 'em; and, as sure as a gun, cappin, ef you had been rightly sarved, you'd ha' been tucked up to a swinging limb, and been dressed with a dozen hickories, tell you was made sensible and ashamed."

"Humph!" exclaimed Porgy, emptying the ashes from his pipe, and by no means delighted with the suggestion. But his self-esteem was less combative than usual, and he remained silent. Millhouse proceeded.

"Now, cappin, I've walunteered to be your sense-keeper, as you calls it, in all the plantation business, and you must jest let me have my own way, ef you want to git on sensible in the world. I'm overseer, and you mus'n't come between me and the niggers. I'll do my work and will make 'em do theirs. Ef there's any licking to be done, I'll lay it on. You may look on, but you mus'n't meddle. You may think what you please, but you mus'n't say nothing. We kin talk over the matter every night, and I'll show you the sense of what I've been doing in the day. You kin fish in the river when you please, and hunt in the woods when you please, and go riding and dining out where you please, and I won't meddle nor say nothing; but in the crop, cappin, you mus'n't put a finger to spile what I'm a-doing for your good."

"A very pretty arrangement."

"Ain't it, now?"

"Very! I have your permission to hunt, and fish, and dine abroad, if I think proper. These, then, are my duties?"

"'Zackly! but you are not to take hands and horses out of the crop, cappin, for your 'musements. You're not to carry a good plough-boy off to find bait for you when you're a-fishing; or horse and nigger to beat the woods when you're a-hunting. You must choose one horse for your own riding, cappin, and ick to that."

"You'll let me keep a dog or two, Millhouse?"

"One, I reckon, ef he's a good one, cappin. One good beagle is quite enough for these woods."

"But I shall want a pointer for birds."

"A p'inter! I never could see the use of a p'inter! I kin find as many partridges, or doves, to shoot, in a pea country, as any man can p'nt a gun at, and without any dog at all! I've shot, myself, a whole covey of partridges, sixteen, at a single fire."

"Oh! that was butchery, Millhouse. Anybody can kill partridges upon the ground, or doves upon the tree. But to do this upon the wing, and to *bird* like a gentleman and a sportsman, Millhouse, requires a dog to point and flush."

"Look you, cappin, them's all notions; and when a man's wanting flesh for the pot, and meal for the hoe-cake, it's not resonable that he should be a sportsman and a gentleman. That's a sort of extravagance that's not becoming to a free white man, when he's under bonds to a sheriff."

"D—n the sheriff! Don't mention such an animal in my hearing."

"Well, d—n the sheriff! I'm agreed to that. I've no reason to love the animal any more than you; but when we can't shake off the beast, the best way that I kin see is to draw his teeth. Now, the sort of life you wants to lead, cappin, will do for a nigger gentleman, that ain't got nothing to lose; or for an Ingin gentleman who's got nothing that a sheriff can put under the hammer; but for you that's got edication, and has been a soldier, the thing is different. The difference between a white man and a nigger, or an Ingin, is that a white man was made to gather substance about him, and a nigger and an Ingin was made to waste it. That's the whole. The Ingin was born to clear the woods of the varmints for us; and the nigger to clean up after we've eaten. That's the philosophy."

"And very sensible philosophy too, Millhouse. I had no idea that you had such profound ideas. I begin to think that you'll save me from the sheriff if any one can."

"You must be doing something for yourself, cappin, besides fishing and hunting; or, ef you will hunt, there's a sort of game that, ef you kin take it, will always be sure to bring us meat

for the pot. That's the sort of game that you might hunt, and want no p'inter more than your own nose!"

"Unless yourself, Millhouse. Pray point out this profitable sort of game if you please."

"Well, that ain't so hard a matter. And first, cappin, let me say you're a good-looking personable man, only a little over middle age. You hain't lost your uprightness. Your face is smooth. It hain't got a wrinkle on it. Your eyes is small, but of a mighty sweet sort of blue; and though you're a leetle too fleshy to be *sprigh*, yet, Lord save me, you kin stand a mighty great deal of hard usage."

"And so——"

"And, therefore, cappin, you ought to git married!"

"As logical a conclusion as I ever heard in all my life. A man who can stand hard usage may safely venture upon matrimony. 'Pon my soul, Millhouse, your philosophy and logic improve together."

"I'm glad you think so, cappin," responded the other with increasing gravity. "I've been a-thinking what you ought to do ever sence I heer'd you talking of the bad state of your affairs. Now, says I to myself, what better kin the cappin do, than find some clever, good sort of woman, that's outlived all her girlishness and foolishness, and that's come to know the valley of a husband! That won't be looking too closely at his figure, and thinking his paunch too big, and his legs too little—that won't be axing whether he's cut his eye-tooth or not; but 'll jest consider that a man's a man in spite of his *gairth*, that a soldier's altogether the best sort of a man going in these times; and that'll pass over the sprinkle of gray in his head, in consideration of his sound teeth and good wind. Now, cappin, you does git a leetle out of wind, when you're pushed too hard; but considering what a mortal weight of flesh you've got to carry, it's wonderful how much you *kin* stand. It's wonderful I say, and jest as surprising as wonderful. Well, now, considering all these things, what's to hender you from gitting to the right side of some good woman, with a smart chance of property, and proving your title to it, by the sensible way you come over her. I reckon there's more than a hundred such women here, in Carolina, now, that, when they come to consider

how many of the handsome young fellows is cut off in the war, will be mighty glad to hev' you in spite of figger, and gray hairs. You ain't so old, cappin, but that you've a right to hev' a wife: and, under the sarcumstances, I say, a wife is the one thing needful; that is always providing sho's got something of a property to go upon; for, onless you git a woman of substance, it'll only make your affairs harder to manage than ever. You must be thinking of a woman that'll pay off that mortgage you talk about, and hev' something over. Then, we kin work the plantation to some purpose. Then you needn't fear the d——d warmint of a sheriff, and then, with God's blessing on our innocent disposition, we may all live here like fighting cocks."

All this, and much more, was said with a delightful gravity. Porgy was overwhelmed. He was so taken by surprise, by the coolness with which Millhouse analyzed himself and his affairs, and reported upon his shortness of wind, while he acknowledged the excellence of his teeth;—the immensity of his girth, while he admitted the amiable cast of his eyes; his slenderness of leg, (or "shrunk shank," as Porgy muttered *sotto voce*) while recognising the smoothness of his cheeks—that he was absolutely *dumb-foundered*, and never once thought to interrupt him, letting him run to the end of his tether, which was by no means a short one. At length, the worthy sergeant came to a halt. He had reached his climax. What a soldier's idea of life—living "like a fighting cock"—properly must be, need only be left to the conjecture of the reader. Porgy evidently understood it.

"That would be something, indeed, Millhouse."

"Wouldn't it!" exclaimed the other,

"Yes, indeed; as fighting militia men, we have seldom been allowed the privilege of living like fighting cocks, and I confess, for one, I should like to try it, for a season, if only by way of a change. But——"

Here the captain of partisans turned uneasily.

"Lance," said he to the lieutenant, "those negroes will never finish supper unless you stir them up; and I begin to think that the house would be quite as comfortable as the avenue. This mist is turning into rain. Get in, my lad, and see after them, and let them make a clearing for us!"

The youth disappeared in an instant.

"And so, Millhouse, you think I am still able to undergo the fatigues of matrimony?"

"It's the very thing for you, cappin."

"Well, you've thought so much upon the subject, I suppose you've even thought of some woman in particular, such as you describe, who has 'the needful,' and knows the value of a man. Pray, tell me, if such is the case."

"To be sure, I hev'! I've seed the very woman, and so hev' you."

"Ah! Well——"

"Well! it's jest the same lady, here, that we cut loose from the robbers—this widow Ebeleigh. When I seed the supplies in her wagon, and seed how liberal she was in giving; when I seed the bacon and the bread, the sugar and the coffee, and the old rum, cappin—says I to myself—'That's the woman for the cappin;' and I say it agin, cappin, she's a woman you kin stand. I wouldn't be consenting to your having any sort of a woman, but this here one is a beauty for a man at your time, who's a soldier, and knows what's good living in this world! And I'm a-thinking, cappin, that that's not far from her notion too. She looked on you amazin' sweet, I tell you."

"It is something to be thought of, Millhouse; but, as the widow isn't here, just now, suppose we try the rum? What do you say to a toddy?"

"Well, I say, that's quite a sensible and sedger-like idee."

"Your arm, my good fellow," quoth Porgy; and, with the help of the sergeant, he heaved his bulk into uprightness, and both of them passed into the house; from the hall of which Frampton had by this time expelled the negroes, sending them into the basement, Tom and Pompey alone remaining above, with the view to making proper arrangements for the night.

CHAPTER XXXI.

MUSINGS—MIDNIGHT ALARM.

"Tom," said Porgy, stirring his rum and sugar, and touching glasses with the sergeant (Frampton declined to drink)—"Tom, where are you going to spread my blankets to-night?"

"Yer, maussa—yer by de fire. Yer's de place for you; de leftenant must lie dere, and de sarjint will ease he limbs yender, close by de sugar keg."

"'Twon't do, Tom! I must sleep in my old room, you rascal, if it's habitable. You know this, but——"

"But dere's no fire dere, maussa."

"And why the d——l didn't you have a fire made there, you lazy rascal? See to it at once. Open the room, and if there's floor enough for my length and breadth, have it swept out in the twinkling of an eye. Set some of the fellows at once to work bringing in wood and kindling fire."

"Yes, Pomp——"

"Let Pomp alone. I want him here. Do it yourself, if you can find no one else."

Tom disappeared, and stirred up the negroes below stairs. The door of a chamber entering from the hall was thrown open, and a torch carried in.

"Is it habitable?" was the demand of Porgy.

"Oh yes, maussa, when I done bresh 'em out, and mek de fire bu'n. One ob de floor-board is gone, but nuff lef for you lie 'pon."

"Very good. Bestir yourself. And now, men, for the order of the day to-morrow. We must get an early breakfast, and set out betimes for the burial of these rascals. Lance, did you instruct one of the fellows to ride over at daylight to Mrs. Eveleigh's for the shovels?"

The reply was affirmative.

"Very good. And now, men, the sooner you take your rest

the better. To-morrow we must be stirring. There is much to be done. Tom, do you give out a blanket to each of the negroes; take one for yourself, and give Pomp another. Put the rest into my room. You, Tom and Pomp, will sleep in the shed-room, to be within call. See to the negroes below, before you lie down, that they do not crowd into the fire. If let alone, the blockheads will burn us all up. Have an eye to them. We must build a few pole-houses as soon as possible. And now to bed. Millhouse will you take some more rum before you sleep?"

"Not a drop, cappin."

"Help yourself, Tom, and put the rest safely away."

"T'ank you, maussa," and Tom helped himself with a liberal hand. Millhouse had already stretched himself out, and rolled in his blanket. Frampton lay upon his, resting upon his elbow, with his head upon his palm, and gazing demurely into the fire. Porgy cast a dubious glance around him, then gathering up his sword and holsters, was about to retire, when he turned and said:—

"Who has seen to the horses?"

Frampton replied:—

"I have fastened them under the piazza, captain, and given them both corn and fodder. Mrs. Eveleigh's overseer brought over a supply to last a week."

"Ah!—all's right. Well, good night, men, and a good sleep to you—though I may as well tell you that the house is haunted."

Millhouse growled from within his blankets, with something of the tone of a bull-dog suspicious of a stranger. Frampton's eye brightened a little, but, except the "good night" with which he replied to the captain's, he said nothing. In a few moments, Porgy, Tom, and Pomp, having retired to their several lairs, the house was left in deep quiet, save from an occasional murmur that ascended from the negroes in the basement.

Our captain of partisans entered the chamber, and let himself down upon the pile of blankets which formed his couch. This was spread before the fireplace, and he sat with his feet to the blaze. He had disencumbered himself of his coat and small-clothes, his boots and stockings. His sword and pistols lay be-

side him, his saddle, over which one of the blankets was spread, served him for a pillow. But for a long time he did not lie down. His eyes were bent upon the fire, or slowly wandered around the almost vacant chamber. It was a snug, but sufficiently capacious apartment, probably eighteen by twenty feet. The walls still exhibited proof of a degree of pride and state, which declared for a former wealth and taste, such as were strangely inconsistent with the present fortunes of the possessor. The panelling of wood over the fireplace still showed traces of two landscape paintings in oil, done upon the panels with no inconsiderable art. The framework around them consisted of heavy carved work, and the pillars of the mantel-piece were richly ornamented with carvings in similar style. About the room still hung the dingy and shattered frames of pictures, probably portraits, from which the canvass had been cut out. It had probably been found useful for the meanest purposes, and had been appropriated, with all other moveables of any value, by the marauding British and tories. The glass was destroyed in the sashes of all the windows. The shutters were mostly torn from the hinges and carried off, probably destroyed for firewood. One of the planks of the floor had been taken up, and lay beside the opening, very much hewed and mangled by the axe. The fragments of an ancient mahogany bedstead lay piled up in one corner, but it was evidently no longer available for use. It had been that on which Porgy had slept when a child: it was the bedstead of his mother. A bit of green cord still depended from a nail against the opposite wall. It had sustained the picture of his mother; that portrait of a fair young woman, taken when she was yet unmarried, whose sweet smiling features, in the active exercise of memory and fancy, seemed still to be looking down upon him.

Porgy knew not that the big tears were gathering slowly in his eyes, and gradually stealing down upon his cheeks. He had reached his home, but it was a home no longer. The home is made by the hopes which it generates, and he had survived all those, of whatever sort, which came with youth and childhood. The prospect before him was one of unmixed desolation. How was he to redeem the mortgaged acres of his domain? How was he to retain the poor remains of a once ample fortune?

What were his own resources for this task? What were left for him to do, and where was the agency, external to himself, by which to effect the difficult achievement. The embarrassing straits of his condition had made themselves apparent to him, most fully, on the moment of his return. But for the unexpected events of the day, and the generosity of Mrs. Eveleigh, he must have gone, himself, supperless to sleep, and witnessed the privations, in extreme, of his followers and slaves.

And the relief was temporary only. He must provide for these hereafter; and how? By incurring new embarrassments and obligations; by adding to the weight of former bonds and responsibilities; by endeavoring to establish a credit without being able to offer new securities. Was it probable that he could do this, in the unsettled condition of the colony? And what securities could he offer to the creditor? His lands were mortgaged to an amount five times their present value. A foreclosure of mortgage at the present juncture would not only sweep them away, but take his negroes also, and still leave him a debtor beyond all means of payment. Even if time were allowed him, could he hope, criminally ignorant as he was of all the arts requisite to the good planter, to recover himself and renovate his fortunes? These were the subjects of his meditations, and, chewing the bitter cud of thought and memory, his heart almost failed him.

He stretched himself out upon his blankets almost reproaching the merciful fate which had saved him from the bullet or bayonet of the enemy. His despondency for awhile, increased with his meditation, until he felt that it would not be difficult that very hour to die. To die, was to escape the cares, the troubles and the humiliations to which he felt himself unequal, and which he now felt to be inevitable from life, with such a prospect as now grew up, dark and distinct, before his mind. He would have found it at once easy and grateful to be roused that moment with the call to battle. He would have rejoiced to find a full finish to his cares, in a desperate onset, at the head of his corps of partisans. "But the wars were all over," and this refuge was denied him. He must live and how to live? The reflections that followed this inquiry, arrayed before him the small operations of his little force of half-a-dozen negroes

in the rice fields, under the doubtful management of Sergeant Millhouse. True, the sergeant boasted of his merits as a rice planter, but was it so sure that he knew anything of the matter? True, rice was the most profitable crop then made in the country, but how much rice, even supposing the best management, and the most favoring seasons, could be made by his half-dozen negroes?

But then came up the last suggestion of the sanguine Millhouse. There was the widow Eveleigh! The widow was a woman of goodly form, of gracious manners, of fine and independent estates. The widow had experienced his friendly services; she had witnessed his valor in her cause; he had perilled life in her defence; he had, in all probability, saved herself from brutality, and her son from death. These were eminent services. She evidently felt them. Why should he not aspire to the widow? Was he not a man of person, portly, of commanding figure, of good features, and quite young enough for her. The captain stroked his chin with a sense of satisfaction as he reasoned thus. But, just then, occurred to him the somewhat disparaging reflection of the sergeant upon his legs. He looked down at the members, which were thus assumed to be impediments to progress, in direct conflict with their designed uses. Surely, they are not so slender—they are not shrunken at all; their dimensions are as great as ever. It is only in contrast with the mountainous abdomen, that they appear inferior. It was with some feeling of reproach and impatience that our captain fixed his eyes on the unnaturally distended member. By what malice of fate was it that it had so greatly grown at the expense of all the rest! But he was kept from quarrelling outright with the one region, by a timely recollection of the famous allegory of Menenius Agrippa.

"No! no!" quoth he to himself. "This will never do. I could wish my storehouse differently shaped and sized, if only for compactness and more easy carriage; but it has done good service in its time, and it is my own fault if I have used it a little too much, and the other members much too little. Had I worked them more, and it less—had I suffered them less to take their ease, I should now have nothing to complain of, either in respect to their deficiency or its excess. It has distributed

as liberally as it could, according to my allowance; and they according to Agrippa, have received 'the flower of all,' leaving to the belly the bran only. Certainly, it is a monstrous necessity that I should be compelled thus to carry with me such a bag of bran. But what is to be done? It is an inheritance which one may not mortgage; a store-house of which no sheriff can deprive the possessor. This, at least, is a perfect right and indefeasible!" and he laid his hands rather affectionately on the region under description.

"At least!" he continued, "there is nothing insignificant about it. It may not be comely to the eye, but nobody can regard it as contemptible. It is not calculated to admit of the exhibition of grace; but what gentleman is ambitious of the renown of a dancing-master. Still, it is something on parade. Nobody finds fault with such an abdomen in a general. It embarrasses no man whose position requires that he should move with dignity. It guaranties the courage of the proprietor, since one is scarcely apt to run in battle, with such extensive stores to carry with him. No! no! sergeant, you shall not persuade me out of the faith that my parts are at all in the way of my person. But you may persuade me to the effort to place them properly in the way of other people. This widow is a noble creature—pleasing to the eye; amiable, I know; well off, in respect of fortune. She can redeem my acres. She can put me on my legs again, however heavy my incumbrance. And why should she not do so? She is young enough still for tastes and sensibilities, for which mere wealth can never suffice. She has tasted of matrimony, and does not seem to have suffered from the taste. We must think more closely of this matter."

He laid himself back upon his saddle, and mused awhile; rose again, and sitting, pushed up the brands, and drew the blanket over his legs. His meditations were now upon topics and details more immediately pressing.

"To-morrow, we will bury these scoundrels. It will take us till afternoon. We can do little more that day. The next I am to dine with the widow. Humph! After that I must set off for the city. We must have ploughs and hoes, and a hundred other things for the plantation. Millhouse must be pacified. The negroes set to work. We must work, that is clear, though

the sheriff steps into the harvesting. Wagons, ploughs, hoes, axes, rope, furniture — I must have. By Jupiter! I am resolved to die in a feather-bed, if I can. Food — we must have some bacon for the negroes. I must have some wine for myself, and for a guest, and rum for the sergeant. Kitchen furniture —"

And he enumerated a score of other commodities.

"But, the d—l! How for the credit! I must counsel on the subject with the widow. A woman is never more flattered by a man than when he solicits her advice. She usually gives him more than he bargains for, but she not unfrequently gives herself into the bargain!"

The meditations of Porgy, mixed as they were, carried him late into the night. When every thing was still about the premises he was wakeful. As a thought would occur to him with any force, he would rise, fling a fresh brand into the fire, and sit up watching the blaze; lie down again for awhile, only to start up once more to meditation. But nature asserted her necessities at last, and his nostrils soon furnished audible echo to those sounds which he had heard at intervals issuing from the neighboring hall, and, as he assumed, from the proboscis of the sergeant. Deep thus continued for a season to call unto deep, without either paying much heed to their mutual responses. Once, it is true, a more than ordinary explosion from the sergeant's nose, seemed to disquiet the slumbers of the captain.

"Zounds!" quoth he, drowsing again. "How Millhouse does snore! What an infirmity! — peculiar, I believe, only to the lower orders. Gentlemen never snore! How is it with ladies? Wonder if the widow Evel——"

And the conjecture remained unconcluded; and the mutual nostrils of captain and sergeant continued to respond to one another, without causing any annoyance to either party. But they were both destined to be aroused by an explosion of very different character. They had slept some hours, soundly, as was natural to men who had gone through such a day's work as that we have already described. It were on toward morning — was, indeed, but a short hour to daybreak — when Porgy started up with a ringing and a rushing sound, seemingly immediately at his ears. Millhouse was awakened at the same moment. They were both upon their feet in an instant. But they were

in the dark. The fire had burned down in both apartments, and Millhouse was stumbling in confusion over kegs and boxes, not knowing in which way to turn, or whence came the sounds of alarm which were still ringing in his ears. The captain wakened to instant consciousness of his situation. It was a pistol shot he had heard the moment after he was awakened. He detected a rush in the piazza, and fancied he could hear still the distant tramplings of a horse. He could also hear the soft dull pattering of the rain upon the roof of the piazza. There was evidently an alarm. His holsters were caught up, and the pistols detached in an instant. In another he was feeling his way into the hall, whither he made his way without any difficulty, the whole region being familiar to his childhood. Suddenly he encountered Millhouse. They grappled one another with a mutual instinct.

"Speak!" cried Porgy, "or I shoot."

"Is't you, cappin, is it?"

"What's the matter, Millhouse?"

"Dogs! I don't know! I jest heard bang! bang! and a shouting, and a noise of feet, and started up to make my way out, and heeled over one of these d——d kags! I've spilt some blood in the affair, though it's only from my nose."

"A part that may well spare it," replied Porgy, not willing to forego his jest at any season. "But, where's Lance?"

"I ha'n't seed him."

"Then it was his pistol. That fellow never sleeps. Stay! that window is open on the piazza. I see. He has jumped out there. Let me find the door. We must see after him. He's a sentinel among a thousand. Those d——d negroes haven't heard a word of the matter."

"Hain't turned over for a second nap, I reckon."

"Strike a light, Millhouse! Here's the fireplace, you know where you put the flint and tinder. I've got the door."

Saying these words, Porgy unfastened the door and stepped out into the piazza. All was still for a few moments. He could see nothing. The night was dismally dark. The rain fell in a settled shower. The wind sighed at a distance very mournfully. Porgy waited in silence. As the light kindled within, he drew the door to, that it might offer no aid to a random bullet. He

stood thus, beginning, in his only half-dressed condition, to shiver with the chilling night wind, when he heard a footstep upon some decaying branches on the earth below.

"Who goes there?"

"Lance!" was the reply, and the young lieutenant sprang up the steps, covered with mud, and soaking with water, with a pistol in each hand.

"What the d—l's the stir, Lance?"

The youth's story was soon told. He was awakened by a trampling and seeming confusion among the horses below. He listened, and, as the stir continued, he rose, found his pistols, and was preparing to step out quietly, when he distinctly heard the free movements of a single steed, as if guided round the house. He immediately dashed open the shutter of the window under which he lay, jumped out into the piazza and challenged. Instead of an answer, the horse was put into instant motion down the avenue. He fired twice, at random, at the object which he fancied he could see, but he supposed without effect. He then darted down the steps, and down the avenue for a hundred yards, but without result. The fugitive, whoever he was, had succeeded in making his escape.

Of the mischief done, if any, nothing as yet was known. To this inquiry all parties now addressed themselves. Porgy hurried on his clothes. Millhouse, penetrating the shed-room where Tom, the cook, and Pomp, the fiddler, were doing any quantity of sleep, endeavored to arouse them both at the same moment, by punching them, as they lay side by side, with his sheathed sabre in his one hand, and with the stump of his remaining arm. His sword stirred Pomp into consciousness, while the stump of arm, pressing closely against Tom's cheek, was instinctively seized, by the sleeve, between the teeth of the negro, and held with a growl, which made the sergeant a little doubtful of his condition.

"Why, Tom," said he, "you're wolf-bit, and dog-bit too, I reckon, jedging by the sort of teeth you carry; but let loose, old fellow, or I'll be drawing your teeth out with a handspike."

"Who dat?" quoth Tom.

"Git up, you varmint, and shake yourself."

"Gorrah! I never guine git my sleep!"

"Sleep! You've had enough for a month. You sleeps like a bear in cold weather."

"Dis dah cold wedder 'nough for nigger. Ef I bin bear, Mass Millh'us, I nebber been let you go so easy. Wha' de matter now? Wha' for you no let poor sodger nigger hab he leetle sleeps widout 'tir 'em up wid stump and swode?"

"Why, we're robbed and killed here, you skunk; we've had a fight with the tories, and they've scalped Lance, and shot the cappin in three places, his head, his belly, and his witals."

"Lord ha' massy! Shoot mausa jes' as he git to he own home at last. I never b'lieb, eben ef I see em. Ho! mausa, I say, in der'!"

And, shouting as he went, followed by Pomp, Tom, the cook, now thoroughly awakened, hurried to join the group within the hall. Torches were kindled, and all armed, the party sallied out, having divided, one portion taking the front, the other the rear outlet. The house was circled, the avenue explored; horse-tracks were found going forth, freshly made in the mud; and an examination of the horses showed one of them to be missing.

"'Tis de raw bone black, Pomp; De same *sawt* of hoss I bin see dat d—n Bossick ride."

The proceeding was a sufficiently daring one.

"The squatter, Bostwick?" queried Porgy, looking to Tom.

"Da him, mausa, sure as a gun."

"It may be! Well!" compressing his lips. "He may ride one horse too much for his own comfort yet."

"The foal of an acorn!" said Millhouse. "I reckon it was sartain one of the chaps we fout with yesterday, whether you call him Bossick or what. And a mighty sassy fellow! Why, cappin, sich a thing hardly ever happened to us in all the campaigns."

"No, indeed!"

"It is a shame and a disgrace to us as sodgers."

"You forget that the war is over and we had no reason to expect attack. But it's no use talking. Well it's no worse. He might have taken all, but for Lance. Millhouse, you sleep like a tomb-stone, and snore like the seven sleepers. There's no more sleep for any of us to-night. It must be near day Tom, turn in and have us some coffee. Lance, send off the fel-

low to the widow Eveleigh's for the spades and hoes. Tell him to go to the overseer's house, and be careful not to disturb the lady. Sergeant, will you take a little rum now, or wait for the coffee?"

"Well, cappin, jest to be a-doing, I'll do both."

"You were born to be a soldier, sergeant," replied Porgy quietly, as he motioned to the liquor before him. Pomp was already at hand with a gourd of water. But Millhouse drank alone. Porgy had already turned to his usual resource, and was crowding fresh tobacco into his pipe. Day dawned within the hour, but very gloomily, and the rain, though slackened, still continued.

CHAPTER XXXII.

RETURN TO THE FIELD OF BATTLE.

THE day, as was expected, opened in gloom. The sun made no showings that morning. The skies were enveloped in unbroken cloud and vapor, relieved imperfectly by a constant fall of rain, which was of that cool, measured, deliberate sort, which indicates unfailing resource, and a quiet determination to have its own way. Our captain of partisans walked out into the piazza, front and rear, without any sense of relief from either quarter. The avenue in front exhibited a dreary aspect in spite of the fact that it was composed mostly of evergreens. The great oaks, grown together and arching above the track, each wore its heavy streamers of gray moss, which drooped almost to the earth with the great water-drops, like the old-fashioned pictures of winter, his big beard crested with icicles. Vacant fields on either hand, fenceless and wholly uncultivated, added vastly to the dreariness of the scene. Fog and cloud, vapor and rain, were present everywhere, and made everything as gloomy to the eyes of the spectator as it was to his thoughts. Those old fields, should he ever again see them smiling in corn? The old house, whose timbers groaned beneath his tread, how long should he enjoy its shelter? Should he ever, with any feeling of secu-

rity, behold it gay with the joyous faces of his friends? Was not all the life-prospect before his mind as sombre and cheerless as that before his eyes? While he mused thus, perhaps with a wholesome bitterness having in it no small degree of self-reproach, he was joined by Millhouse.

"These old fields, cappin," said the latter, extending the stump of his arm, as he spoke, to the indicated quarter, "these old fields will be sure to bring fine corn; they are all matted with weeds, and have been lying out so long. I reckon you 'aint ricollect when they were planted last?"

"Not I!" was the answer.

"But you hev' seen 'em a-growing, cappin?"

"I suppose so; I can now see that they have been planted, and I suppose in my time; but really, my good sergeant, to say that I saw them in a crop, or ever saw the crop, of any kind, when I was professedly a planter, would be something of a rashness on my part. Pray believe that I was a very foolish, profligate person, who, in ceasing to be young, did not cease to be foolish, and continued his absurd vanities and excesses to the last. And I am telling you now, Millhouse, what has been but too commonly the case among our young men of fortune of my day. There were some exceptions, it is true; but the curse of my generation was that our fathers lived too well, were too rapidly prosperous, and though they did not neglect the exercise of a proper industry in themselves, they either did not know how to teach it to their children, or presumed on the absence of any necessity that they should learn. We were to be affluent in what they should leave us—enough, in God's name, if we could keep it—but it is very sure that the best way to teach one to value and to keep what he gets, is just to teach him how to get it himself. He who has not learned the one lesson will fail in the other, and is apt to waste what he did not work for. And now, my good fellow, don't say another word to me about the crops in past seasons. I have really no wish to confess my sins and follies to man as well as to myself and God. Turn in, if you are so disposed, and make your crops; you say you know how, and I am willing to believe you. I will assist you when I can——"

"But don't you meddle, cappin.'

"Oh, no! you shall have full swing for a season, at least, and I will second you—I will be *your* sergeant only. You shall have a fair share of the spoils at harvest-time, and we'll continue to live as decently as possible in the meanwhile. And that reminds me that it is time for breakfast. That rascal, Tom, because we broke his slumbers so suddenly this morning will be out of humor all day. Let's see to him."

Millhouse was not quite satisfied to have his mouth shut so summarily by the frank confession of the faults and follies on the part of his superior. He was not content that a general confession, however sweeping, should anticipate the details, one by one, of Porgy's short-comings. He had a sort of inquisitorial faculty for dragging out the truth, inch by inch, slowly from the criminal, so that he should not escape a single pang which was proper to his case; and his deliberate purpose had been to take the captain over his territories, field by field, and extort from him at each some admission of fault or ignorance. It was with a growl that he yielded to the very decided manner of his superior which at once closed the door against further "question."

The day, opened as we have seen with bustle and confusion, was destined to be a busy one. Breakfast was sullenly prepared by Tom, with whom the whole world had seemed to go wrong from the moment when the stump of Millhouse's arm that morning had made so free with his sensibilities; and Pomp, stupid rather than savage, was serving it up to our partisans, as he had done the supper the night before, when Fordham, the overseer, suddenly cantered up to the house. He had brought with him the negro who had gone for hoes and shovels, with some three or four others, similarly provided, for the purpose of assisting in the burial of the outlaws. This was due to the timely suggestion of the Widow Eveleigh, who, the night, before, had given the overseer his instructions, and who had expressed herself particularly anxious for the recovery of a certain mahogany box, which she urgently counselled him to look for in all the places in which the outlaws had been seen to harbor during the day of her adventure. She did not tell him of the contents of the box, and had been silent, so far as he was concerned, in respect to the paper which contained the memoranda of M'Kewn, and the signature of that amiable philanthro-

pist. Fordham, accordingly, simply stated that a mahogany box was missing containing fifty guineas; and we may mention in this place that Porgy, his followers, and the negroes generally, all busied themselves in its search with as much anxiety as if the property had been their own. But the labor was unavailing, and the search was finally given up as hopeless, after a persevering scrutiny in swamp and thicket, hiding-place and hollow, wherever it seemed possible or plausible to think that the outlaws had penetrated. But to return.

Fordham was invited to share the breakfast, which he did with right good-will. He was now told of the alarm which the party had had, and the loss which they had suffered, of one of the captured horses.

"Which one, cappin?" demanded Fordham.

"A raw-bone black."

"Ah!"

"Da Bossick hoss, Mass Fordham," quoth Tom, putting in confidently. "Pomp say he know de hoss, and John Sylbester bin tell me de same t'ing."

"He look like hoss I bin see Bossick ride one time."

"But you ain't sartin, Pomp?" asked Fordham.

"He bin ride raw-bone black, one time."

"It may be," said Fordham. "Bostwick is not too good for any villany; and we have good reason to think it was by his means that your niggers and Mrs. Eveleigh's was carried off to the British. We don't know for sartin, but it's mighty like. Now, I have hearn of Bostwick riding a raw-bone black, but I don't know that I ever seed him on the critter in my life. He's a mighty cute fellow that never lets you git too near to him. I'm pretty sure he headed them rascals yesterday, yet I never seed one man more than another that I could lay finger on for him and be sart'in. Yet I could almost swear a Bible oath that he was one of them, and one of the worst. There was one on them that called Jenny, the nigger gal, by the right name; and I reckon he was the one. He know'd her well, and let the word slip *on*awar's."

"Does not the fellow live somewhere in this neighborhood still?" demanded Porgy.

"Well, thar's no telling if *he* lives anywhar. *He's* never to

be seen in these parts. I haven't heard of him for a year, positive, from anybody that could sw'ar they seed him. He's got his family on the corner of Mrs. Ev'leigh's land, and not far from yours—jest in the swamp, and not a half a mile from the river; but I reckon he's hardly there once a year. The family never sees much of him, I'm sartin."

"But that is one of his quartering places. We must root 'em out, Fordham; his family is as bad as himself. Has he any sons?"

"A leetle boy, only, and two gals. The boy is just creeping about. The two gals are most half grown—one's about twelve, I reckon, the other ten. But, Lord love you, cappin, there's no rooting these people out. It would be the cruellest thing that you could do. They are so poor and miserable, and so humble, and the poor wife's so sad and heart-broken, and *on*happy, and the gal children is so sweet, and so mighty pretty, *pre*ticularly the oldest, who's a born beauty, jest like the darter of some great people. As for being as bad as himself, that's not so, cappin, axing your pardon. They're good people, working hard, night and day, and gitting none of the benefit of all that Bostwick *ai*rns or steals. He's hardly ever with 'em, and does nothing for 'em when he comes, *on*less for the oldest gal, and they tells me that he pets her a leetle, and according to his humors. It's a hard case for them that they have to do with sich a born rascal; but what's to help it? The poor wife can't get rid of *him* now; and the poor little children—they can only groan and cry together, when they're by themselves, and take what the marcy of God sends 'em, through the hands of their neighbors. You kain't think of rooting 'em out. Mrs. Ev'leigh knows jest as well as anybody what Bostwick is, but she has pity on the poor wife and children. She gives them spinning to do, and weaving, and the oldest darter is both mighty clever to work and willing; and it's through Mrs. Ev'leigh that they gits on at all: but for her, they'd starve; she feeds 'em, and physics 'em, and clothes 'em; and yit that black-hearted scamp, Bostwick, has been about the worst inimy of her and her plantation, that she ever had in these parts."

"Well, Fordham, I'm sworn to do this poor woman and her children a greater charity than ever Mrs. Eveleigh has done—"

"Ah! you kain't do that easily, cappin."

"I will!"

"What's that?"

"I've sworn by Acheron and Styx, to see Bostwick hung to the first good swinging limb within half an hour after I lay eyes upon him."

"And may God, in his marcy, grant you the strength and the chance, cappin, to keep your oath! That would be a great charity I'm consenting, to the poor woman and the little chicks; and I'm willing to take a hand in it, whenever you are ready to tree the critter. Ef she was free of him, she would do better, for he brings her no help, and I'm a-thinking takes away from her all she can airn. Besides, people's afear'd to hire her at their places, for fear they'll bring him about 'em. Ef he was dead and out of the way, she would be a thousand times better off."

"We must pay her a sudden visit to-day—try to ascertain if he has been there lately, and when. He would hardly visit the neighborhood without seeing them."

"That's as it happens, and seems idvisable. He wouldn't risk a hair of his head on a visit to them at any time, though the niggers do say that he loves the oldest gal."

"And she's a beauty?"

"A real flower of the forest, cappin."

"Poor thing! Why don't Mrs. Eveleigh take her home?"

"She's afear'd of the father's coming about the place; besides, the mother won't let her leave her. She says she's her only comfort, and I reckon she is. She's a real sweet, smart, and beautiful little critter."

"We'll see them coming back. You can guide us, Fordham, for I pretty much forget all the routes in this quarter. And now, to horse."

"But what's the need for you to go, cappin?" demanded Fordham and Millhouse in the same breath. "We kin bury these blackguards, and look up for the box without troubling you; and you see the rain keeps on."

"A fig for the rain! After soaking for seven years in rain, and, indeed, all sorts of liquors, to talk to me now of another thing as a thing to skulk from. Shut up, my good fellows.

Pomp, my horse! Besides, how do I know but that you may have customers in the surviving robbers. A couple of stout rascals, in ambush, would easily settle twice their number, for your negroes could never be relied on. Ho! Pomp!"

"Wha' mek' you holler, maussa! Enty you see de hoss ready by de tree. All ready but you swode and pistols, and yer he is."

Thus Tom, with sword and holsters on his arm, expostulated with his master against his stentorian utterance. The sword was quietly girded about the waist of Porgy by Frampton, while Tom followed with the holsters. A few moments, and the party moved up the avenue, all mounted, even the negroes, who carried their hoes and shovels across their thighs, or up in air, as the Scythian and Camanche robber carries his spear, and went forth better pleased with the idea of burying their dead, than with that of going into battle.

Their farther progress requires no detailed report. They reached the skirmishing ground in due season, and reviewed its aspects. The slain outlaws were found undisturbed where they had been left, and were buried where they lay. No coffin or shroud enwrapped the forms of those who had cast themselves off from social sympathies. Holes in the earth, some three feet deep, beyond the reach of wolf and wildcat, sufficed to hide them out of sight. And this was all. The negroes heaved up the earth in mounds above them, and a stake, cut from the woods, and driven down at the head of the grave, indicated to the wayfarer the place of human sepulture, in that wild spot, and remote from settlement or church, very much as the wayside cross in Spain denotes where the murdered traveller has perished. This duty done, and the search after the lost box of Mrs. Eveleigh proving ineffectual, our captain of partisans, some two hours after noon, proposed to his party to return. All assented but Lance Frampton, who seemed to hesitate, and, by his manner, reminded Porgy of the young man's obligations elsewhere.

"Ah! Lance, by the way," said he, "ride over and see Mrs. Griffin and her daughter. It is but two miles and a half from us where we stand, and a shorter distance, by twice that number, than if you go back with us, and then proceed. You can return at night, or not, as you think proper. Of course, we

want you, if you can be spared, and will keep supper for you till bedtime. Go, my good boy, and present my best respects to the good widow. You remember, I spend the day, to-morrow, at Mrs. Eveleigh's, and shall wish you to accompany me. Millhouse will go, also, while Tom keeps watch at home. The next day, or soon after, I shall, probably, be compelled to set out for the city to get supplies. There now, my lad, you have all my plans for the present, and can make your own arrangements accordingly."

"Ef you are riding ower to the widow Griffin's now, lieutenant," said Fordham, turning to the youth, "be so good as to say to her, that I'll send the peas and inyons [onions] over to her Saturday night—that's all."

And Lance Frampton rode off alone.

"And now, Fordham," said Porgy, "lead the way to the wigwam of the squatter. Let us see his family at all events, and find out, if we can, whether he has been there lately."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

BOSTWICK, THE SQUATTER, AND HIS FAMILY.

It is time that we should return to the recesses of the swamp where we left the squatter, Bostwick, up to his neck in water. No condition could have appeared more hopeless—no situation more humbling or perplexing. It is, perhaps, the case commonly, that the habitual criminal is habitually an unthinking person, who has shunned the utter profitlessness, and certain perils of crime, and so imposes themselves upon the mind of him who rushes in his wantonness of sin, and is taught by the bitter experience of each day the terrible truth that the only wages he can earn, in this employment, is shame and scorn, and fear, and ignominy and death! What had been Bostwick's profits in his career? As he muttered more than once to himself, standing on the cold and gloomy hammock:—

"I have nothing to show! My own sin, and Mencrieff

kin show; they've got the money and the goods; they're great men in the world and rich; but I—I've got nothing but the danger, and the cold, the resk and the exposure, the empty pockets, and the swinging limb! Empty pocket! No! not so bad as all that, either. The widow said there was fifty guineas in her box."

The miserable wretch found his temporary consolation in this reflection. His comrades had mostly perished. He had nearly shared their fate. The plunderers were stripped. They who went forth to shear, came home shorn. Even his horse and rifle had disappeared in the grasp of the partisans; and they were a class of people with whom long experience had taught him that it was very dangerous to meddle. But the recollection of the widow's strong box consoled him for the moment. That was safe. He had hidden it beyond the search and suspicion even of his comrades, and he chuckled to himself, even in that gloomy hour, at the cleverness with which he had succeeded in doing so. Fifty guineas were in that box. Fifty guineas! He began to calculate how long they were to last, according to the life of riot, drinking, and gaming, which he led. He made no appropriations of any portion to his family. They had no such need as himself. Fifty guineas! and the papers. They, too, must be in that box; and these papers, according to the inadvertent admissions of M'Kewn, were important to his safety.

"The d——d skinflint!" muttered Bostwick to himself. "He shall pay for them or hang! He talks of me hanging, and to my face, jest as ef he had any right to make me feel *oneasy*. But we'll see who has most right to hang. We'll see who's the rope guine to fit best. The mean, dirty scoundrel. I see what he's after; but I'll put a spoke in that wheel will upset his carriage, ef he don't walk a safe track with me. He's got property. He's a great man now-a-days. He's bought a plantation here jest alongside the widow's, and who but he, with his niggers and lands. Ha! well! He's played a mighty strong hand in the game, but there's a trump he ain't got, and ain't guine to git till he agrees to share the stakes. Let him try! He was quite a clever chap among the British. Lord! how they loved one another; and he's now to be quite a clever chap among the rebels! Well, it's for me to say, I reckon, how much

love is to be lost atween 'em. Only wait! I'll wait—jest as long as it suits me. But now for the box."

And threading his way out of the swamp, with the ease of one who had never walked on freer or firmer ground, he proceeded to the spot in the woods above, not a hundred yards from the place where the widow's carriage had been brought to a halt, in which the box had been safely hid away.

He found it even where he sought. He held it up to the light of the stars. It was heavy, but it was locked. The key had never been taken from the possession of Mrs. Eveleigh. Her bunch still remained in her pocket. She had not been searched; but would have been, in all probability, but for the unexpected defeat of the enterprise of the outlaws. But the want of the key suggested no difficulty to our squatter. At one moment he had lifted up the box to dash it upon a stump, the short process being always the most grateful to the ruffian for attaining his object. But he arrested himself.

"The guineas will scatter, and I kain't afford to lose the ugliest on 'em."

He felt for his knife. It was gone—lost.

"Never mind!" he muttered, "I kin wait 'till I git to see Rachel."

Rachel—poor Rachel—his wife! He thought of her at that moment, not as one whom he loved or cared for, but as the creature from whom he might find service—obtain the implement which should give him access to a more precious treasure. He started off with the box under his arm. His swiftness of foot seemed undiminished by the day's fatigue. He was one of those sinewy, lean, elastic, beings of iron—hardihood and endurance—who seem never to have enjoyed life, yet are equal to all its requisitions. In training, like most people of the same description of life in the same region, he was an Indian—could outwind a horse in a day's journey, and never appear to suffer from thirst or hunger. He had short cuts through swamp and thicket, known to few besides himself, and in half the time occupied by our partisans on horse, he made his way, on foot, to the swamp margins of the plantations of Mrs. Eveleigh and Captain Porgy. Within half a mile stood the wigwam of his wretched family. It occupied a place half hidden in a little clump of woods, near

which stretched a small cornfield of a few acres, the old decaying stalks crumbling over the spot where they had feebly grown He again concealed his box, this time in the hollow of a cypress, when about to emerge from the cover of the swamp. He did not approach his own dwelling without the greatest caution. He knew not what sort of customers he was to encounter in the neighborhood. Winding about the woods wherever a cover could be found, he gradually drew nigh to the rear of the habitation which he skirted cautiously. The hum of the spinning-wheel alone reached his ears from within. He stole up to the habitation and peeped through a crevice between the logs. We will follow his example.

The wigwam was one of the meanest sort of log-houses, not more than sixteen by twenty feet—built of slender pine poles, which were already greatly decayed. The spaces had been closed with clay, but this had mostly fallen out. Originally, the house had been *clap-boarded* (a large, coarse, and inferior shingle) with split pine, and fastened down by wooden pegs. Much of the roofing had decayed, and the openings were thatched with broom-grass and pine-straw—a very slight and imperfect shelter for the encounter with our March and September winds. But there was an additional protection in a great live oak, of a thousand generations, which overspread the roof on the northern side, the branches resting upon it, and, when stirred by the wind, making such a strange scraping along the clapboards—as if a score of wild cats were striving to scratch their way—as would have startled one, not familiar with the noise, with a thousand staggering apprehensions—particularly at midnight. But our squatter's family heard nothing, or if they did, the sounds had become companionable, and thus agreeable. We are not sure that the wife of the squatter did not find it a great relief to listen to the disordered branches, in the long, weary hours of the night, when the children were all asleep, but when the blessing of sleep was denied her eyes. The poor, subdued, faint-spirited woman, she sat within, knitting her worsted and cotton into thick stockings for the ungrateful wretch who peered, unsuspected, between the logs, and beheld her occupation.

She was a thin, frail, pale-faced body, with fair complexion still, of soft, sad eyes, the only remains of a once girlish beauty.

Her look almost vacant, was fixed upon the fire. Her dress was of the plainest sort of blue homespun—her own manufacture—but it was scrupulously neat and clean. She seemed to work unconsciously, as if from habit; yet her fingers traversed the needles and passed the threads with the rapidity of one whose whole soul was in the task. At the other corner of the fireplace, stood her eldest daughter, whom she called Dory. Her proper name was Dorothy. It was her spinning-wheel whose song saluted the ears of Bostwick as he approached the house. Dory, although still but twelve years old, was an adept at all her labors. Nobody—it was her mother's boast—could spin better than Dory, a finer or a stronger thread. And Dory could weave also, quite as well as her mother. The child was nearly as strong. Indeed, responsibilities, at an early period, had matured her mind and body very equally. They grew together, and therefore both grew strong. The child might have passed for a girl of fifteen, so well was she developed. When you looked at her face she seemed still older—there was such a sad, settled, and profound expression in the sweet symmetrical and chastened features. She was very fair, though she bore the fuel from the woods, and the water from the spring. She was tall, and, moving to and fro about the spinning-wheel, she exhibited a natural grace such as an humble life like her's seldom displays. Her hair, a rich auburn, curled and floated free in long silken tresses, having escaped from the massy folds in which she commonly kept it bound. She, too, was clad in the simplest homespun, and her naked feet and ankles, in consequence of the scantiness of her dress, were conspicuous upon the floor. But the floor was kept tidily clean. If there was poverty in the dwelling, there was evidently a natural purity also, which reconciled the spectator to the scene.

The other children of the squatter, were asleep in a pallet in one corner of the room. There was no separate apartment. Dory slept with her mother in the father's absence, and when he came home she crouched in with Bet, her younger sister, and Benny, the infant boy. The mother's bedstead, was a rude frame work of pine, clumsily executed by a country carpenter. There was a single pine table in the room, and four chairs, bottomed with cowhide. This was all the furniture. A

few gourds containing seeds and spices hung against the walls. A shelf outside sustained the water bucket. In a corner of the fireplace was an iron pot, and in a nook of the chamber was leaned a frying-pan. The fragment of a mirror, without frame, a trimmed bit of glass, of a few inches at most each way, was fastened by pegs against one of the logs over the fireplace.

Such was the picture, lightened up fully by the blaze from half-dozen pine knots, which hissed and sparkled in the hearth, giving light and heat equally. The very poor, in all the south, rarely use candles, or those of their own making only. The squatter's wife had hers, it is true, a small supply, made of tallow and myrtle wax, but these were to be used only on particular occasions. They were made by Dory, and were too precious to be wasted. But this was not a consideration with Bostwick. He consumed them whenever he came home, with little heed to the poor child whose means were so small, and whose labors were so heavy. Yet the miserable wretch loved this child as well as he could love any human being—infinitely more than he loved the mother. He was sensible of her beauty—her eye sensibly impressed him. To her he was never brutal, seldom harsh. To all others of the family he was cold or truculent. Something in her glance seemed to impress him with respect, if not awe. She did not shrink from, yet did not seek to conciliate him. She felt, and resented by her withdrawal, his brutalities to her mother. She submitted to his endearments, yet never returned them. Her instincts—shall we not say her thoughts—were all at war with his nature, and the habits in which he indulged. She had courage, too, and, never once forgetting that he was her father, she could yet venture upon terms of rebuke and reproach, at moments when his excesses revolted her, such as became singularly impressive, spoken by the lips of a child, and in the unsophisticated language of the heart. Still he loved her, after a fashion—loved her with a sort of reverence, as she represented to his eyes that higher phase of society to which he felt that he himself could never aspire, and to which, as is commonly the case with the class to which he belonged, he looked ever with feelings of envy and desire.

He announced his presence to the inmates of the hovel, by a peculiar whistle through the logs. The girl looked quietly at

her mother, but said nothing. The woman started up, all in a terror, and hastened to draw the bolt of the door and give him entrance.

"What! Bostwick! You've come?"

"Don't you see me? Well, Dory, hev' you got nothing to say to me?"

"Howdye, father," and the wheel was stopped, and she offered her hand. He kissed her, but not the mother; and frequent repulses had taught the latter not to attempt to bestow her kisses upon him.

"You're all well, I reckon?"

"Yes!" faintly answered the woman, as she resumed her seat by the fire, and her knitting, after drawing a chair for him. Dory resumed her spinning at the same time.

"What! the d—l," said he, "a'n't you guine to git me some supper?"

And he flung himself into the chair, and looked fiercely at the wife.

"We hain't got much," replied the woman, meekly, rising at the same moment and proceeding to one side of the chimney where some clothes were hanging, forming a sort of curtain.

"Much or lestle, let's hev' it; I'm hungry to kill. Got anything to drink?"

"Not a drop, but I'll make you some coffee, Sam, ef you'll wait for it."

"Wait! Humph! Git it! But first, let me hev' a big knife, ef you've got one, and your tinder-box and steel."

"Why, what's become of yourn, Sam?"

"What's that to you? It's lost somewhere."

"And you've been in the water, Sam!"

"Yes? hev' you got any dry clothes for me?"

"There's the old scarlet breeches of the officer, and the coat, Sam——"

"Won't do; scarlet won't do for my wearing now. That time's gone. You must dye them clothes, before I can wear 'em. Dye 'em blue or green, either."

"You come on foot, father?" queried Dory.

"Well, ef I did, Dory, I reckon foot was given me to come on."

"But you hev'n't sold Black Ball?"

"Sold him! Yes! Perhaps! a sort of mortgage, I reckon; but what's the matter? Suppose I hev' sold him, who's to ax about the bargain? Mind your own business, child."

The girl looked at him, quietly, and the brute turned his eyes upon the fire. He somehow couldn't meet her glance. The mother, spreading the table the while, with a rare inexperience, took up the inquisition.

"And where's your rifle, Sam? You didn't bring it with you?"

"Look you, woman, I didn't come here to answer questions. Suppose I left horse and rifle in the swamp, it's what I've had to do a thousand times, and I had my reasons for it; only do you recollect, keep your tongue close when you talks to other people about my horse and rifle, and about me, too, ef you please. You don't know how soon you may be axed. And look you, Rachel, when you've got to answer, see that you do it yourself. Don't leave it to Dory. You kain't trust her. She don't love her father enough, to say what may save him from the inimy!"

"But you've got no inimy now, father. Why should you have an inimy? Don't they say it's peace, now?"

"Peace! As ef there was any peace for me! I tell you the whole country's sworn agin me, only because I wants to git my living out of it. But that's neither here nor there. You 'member, now, you don't know nothing about me:—ef you're axed, you reckon I've left the country. I hain't been here. I've got no black horse—remember that in *pr*eticklar! That's enough! Where's the knife I axed you for?"

"It's here!" said the mother, handing him a clumsy blade, set in a common wooden handle. He looked at it scornfully.

"It's the best we've got," said the woman, apologetically.

"And good enough, too, for all you want with it. Now, git the coffee ready by the time I git back."

With these words, grasping knife, flint, steel, and tinder-box, he rose and hurriedly left the dwelling. The moment he had disappeared, the mother said—

"I wonder what he's after now. I'm afraid it's no good. Lord, ef he'd only stay quiet at home, and make corn for his

family; but there's no such comfort for us, Dory. I'm afear'd. He's got the habit of going off, and doing God knows what; and we must only work as we kin, to keep from starvation."

The girl was silent for a space, and the mother, in the meantime, spread the table, got out some cold meat, and kneaded the dough into a hoe-cake, which was set promptly before the fire to bake. She had resumed her seat, when Dory, pausing at her wheel, remarked quietly and gently, but with that air of certainty which truth, simplicity, and earnest conviction will inspire, at all times, even in a child, and which crown its words with a degree of authority:—

"I wouldn't be asking father any more questions, mother. It does no good, and only makes him angry. He don't mind what we say, and we can't help it when he loses anything. He's always losing, and coming home poor and wanting; and he don't like to tell us how he came to lose. He's in some great trouble now, and you'd better not speak to him about it. I reckon he's not going to stay now he's come; but I wouldn't ask him."

"Ah, Dory, it's easy for *you* to talk so; but when I know—when I know——"

Here the mother sobbed and wiped her eyes with her apron. What did she know? and why did she forbear to declare it? The girl had no answer and no inquiry. The wheel whizzed round more rapidly than ever. The mother spoke again.

"It's fifteen years a'most sence we were married. Then he was so fond of keeping at home. Then he wasn't so fierce and fretful as he is now. Then he didn't drink, and there wasn't a more active person in the world, in the cornfield. Oh! it was a cruel day when he fell into the hands of Dick Jeffords—a cruel day. He's never been the same man sence. Dick Jeffords taught him all that he knows of wickedness—taught him to drink—taught him to——"

Another pause, and sobbing and wiping of the eyes.

"But Dick Jeffords is dead, mother," said the girl. "Don't you talk so of him."

"And why shouldn't I talk of him, when he was the cause of all the mischief——"

"Hush! mother!" with a warning finger, said the child,

pointing toward the door. Her keen ears had distinguished the light footsteps of the squatter. The mother stooped to turn her hoe-cake, and the wheel continued its evolutions even more rapidly than ever.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE SQUATTER'S TREASURES, KNOWN AND UNKNOWN.

The squatter, meanwhile, armed with knife and tinder-box, hurried away to the edge of the swamp, eager to examine his casket of ill-gotten treasures. He drew the box of Mrs. Eveleigh from the hollow of the cypress, and, upon a little bank in the swamp, surrounded by a wall of forest and swamp, thicket, shrubs, vines and trees, he proceeded to strike a light. It required but a few moments after this, to pry open the cover of the box, which was much better suited to a lady's toilet, than for the purpose of keeping or securing a treasure. The guineas were the first objects that compelled his attention. They were contained in a small linen bag. He counted them religiously, and then proceeded to turn over the rest of the contents of the box, which was pretty closely packed with papers. He was able neither to read nor write. He took for granted that the paper, which M'Kewn so much desired, was among them, but the point was one beyond his capacity to determine.

"It's here, I reckon, safe with the rest; but won't he pay for it when he gits it."

His curiosity was satisfied, if not his cupidity. One would suppose that his first act would be to convey to his wife and children a small portion, at least, of the golden spoils in his possession. But he was too selfish and too wary for that. His cunning did not suffer him to risk, in their hands, any proof that might facilitate his detection. It seems that some suggestion did arise in his mind, prompting him to detach a guinea, to be given to Dory. He spoke of her affectionately, and turned the

glittering coin, separated from "his pile," between thumb and forefinger.

"But where's the use," he muttered, "and ef they was to ax where she got it, what is she guine to say?"

He restored it to the heap, restored the bag to the box, with all the papers, and restored the box to the hollow of the cypress, the base of which was encircled by a thick shrubbery. This done, he made his way back to the cottage, where his supper of bacon, corn-bread and coffee, already awaited him. He flung the knife down upon the table, and proceeded to eat, but had scarcely begun, when he commanded that the spinning-wheel should stop.

"The blasted noise keeps a body from hearing anything. Ef an inimy was at the door, nobody could know tell they *bursted* in."

The girl obeyed, put her cotton into the basket, and removed the wheel to a corner of the room. She then disappeared behind the curtain of clothes, and when she again came forth, and drew near the fire, he perceived that she had a book in her hand. Dory had been taught to read by her mother, and loved her book. The eyes of the squatter did not suffer her long from sight.

"A book!" said he, "and what sort of book is it, you've got!'

"It's the Holy Bible, father."

"The Holy Bible; and what do you know about the Holy Bible, and where did you get it, I want to know? You hain't been spending money, or your airnings, upon a thing that's no account, hev' you?"

"No, father, 'twas given to me by Mrs. Eveleigh."

"Well, she might hev' given you something to be more useful to you. She's rich; she might hev' given you some good clothes, I'm a-thinking, ef she'd ha' wanted to do a good thing for you. But these great rich folk are all as mean as h—ll!"

"Mrs. Eveleigh ain't mean, father; and she *has* given me clothes," replied the child.

"She has, has she! what! the frock you've got on, I reckon."

"No, I made that myself. She's given me good clothes, to wear when I go out, and on a Sunday."

"Sunday! as ef there ever was a Sunday for a poor man! Let me look at the book."

She handed it to him without a word, and he turned it over curiously. It was not a costly book; had it been—had the edges been of gold, and the back richly adorned with the same metal—it is quite probable that the perverse wretch would have been tempted to throw it into the fire. As it was, he thrust it back into the child's hands, saying:—

"And what's the good of it to you? You kain't understand it even ef you reads it."

"Oh? yes I can, father."

"Let me hear you read some—thar', jest where the paper's been turned down. I'll see ef you ain't been reading how to curse your own daddy."

The child gave him but a single look, but it made him restless. He could not meet the clear, calm glance fixed upon his own. He turned his gaze upon the fire, but repeated—

"Read, I say—let's hear what sort of bible l'arning you're a-gitting. Read where you've put the mark. That a man's own children should turn agin him!"

The child gave him another look, so simple, so expressive—of a calm, unspeaking, submissive sorrow, the most touching of all sorts of reproach: then, turning to the book she began to read from the New Testament, the Acts of the Apostles, the first chapter, just where the leaf had been turned down; but scarcely had she got through three paragraphs, when the squatter started up, having by this time finished eating, and, swallowing a pint of coffee at a gulph, he cried out:—

"That's enough! It's mighty good, what you're reading, I'm a-thinking, for a gal child. But it's no use. There's no apostles, now-a-days. At least, I never hear tell of any merracles now, or I reckon I might have a chance of being saved myself. But, without a merracle, I'm pretty much past saving, so it's no use to try. Shut up, Dory; you kin read to your mammy after I'm gone. I must be off."

"What!" cried the poor mother, "you're not a guine, Sam, at this late time o' night."

"And what should I stay for? Don't I know there's none of you hev' any love to spare for me here."

"Oh! don't say so, Sammy; don't!"

"Pooh! Git out! Don't suppose I'm fool as well as scamp. You're too full of good books and good women here, to have any likings for sich as me. Kiss me, Dory, you're a good child for a gal. I don't say you shan't read the book the widow give you, only I don't care. You may read, for the good 'twill do you. 'Twon't do me none. Blast all the gifts of your rich people. They only burn the heart out. What's good you kin git out of them, is what you kin take! I'm off; and look you, Rachel, mind what I say. Ef you're axed, you don't know nothing about me. You ain't seed me you don't know when, and, as for a horse, you don't reckon I've had one for a year, not sence the blasted men of Harden carried off my bay trotter. Blast all their two legs for ever for it. Don't you let Dory say nothing. She don't know how to speak sensible in such cases. Good-by, Dory."

And he was gone—gone out into the darkness—lost to sight as to hope. Not another word of kindness or farewell. None in fact, to the poor woman who followed him to the door, as if entreating for it. Not even a glance to the poor children sleeping on the pallet, the eldest of whom, awakened by the unusual voice, raised herself up in the bed, and looked, but did not dare to make herself heard. She had old experience of blows, suddenly and sharply administered, to admonish her against any childlike and loving forwardnesses. Besides, the watchful mother had seen, and pushed her back, under the scanty covering, with—

"Lie still, Bet, it's pappy!"

Dreadful sound with which to quiet the baby! the baby was quiet for the rest of the night. But he was gone, and then the woman sat down and wept over the fireplace.

"Ef he had only shaken hands, Dory, and told me good-by, my child; but no! He wouldn't care ef I was on my cooling board to-morrow."

The girl began quietly to read the chapter in the Acts which she had attempted at her father's bidding, and her low, soft voice, still that of a child, delivered the inspired sentences in good time, and with very tolerable discretion, but without emphasis, and with the simplicity of one who did not fully comprehend what

she was reading. When she had finished and put away the book, the mother said—

"I know it's good to hear and to read the blessed book, but my heart ain't in it. I don't feel it at all. I feel only that I ur. a very great sinner, very poor and miserable."

"We must pray now, mother, you know."

And the two dropped upon their knees, while the child alone audibly uttered "Our Father."

Let us leave them to such sleep as God vouchsafes to the sufferer, more sinned against than sinning, and follow the footsteps of the squatter, reckless of the peace he outrages, and quite incapable of conceiving the purity he leaves behind him.

"Acts of the Apostles," quoth he, as he darted forward in the direction of the highlands. "They sarved for their time. There's no Apostles now, I reckon, to do any more acts for poor people. Sich as preaches to us now, don't help much. Lord! what warmints. I've hearn a hundred that hadn't any more sense, and I reckon, warn't no better, ef the truth was known, than myself. They talk and they talk, about it and about it, and all what they says, don't consarn us at all, and don't suit. One speaks mighty big about luxuries and fine linen, yit I never seed one yit that warnt ready to swig the best of liquors at a rich man's table, and to eat ontell he was ready to burst; and which of 'em ever refused the best of English broadcloth for his back. There was Joe Downs, and Ephraim Sparkin, and Jake Frisbie, and a hundred more I've know'd, that was all jest too lazy for any work, and so they set up to be apostles; living from house to house, never paying for nothing; never refusing good feed and liquor, and jest talking things they didn't onderstand. No! the days for Apostles is at an *eend*, and men does jest what act suits 'em best. So I does mine. 'Taint so good as it mout be, but ef I can git back the old Black, with fifty gould guineas in hand, and what I kin squeeze out of M'Kewn, I'll do for awhile yit. It's a resk to try, but what's to be done? I shan't walk when I kin ride, and ef I take, it's only my own.

Such were the meditations which led to the attempt of the squatter. We have seen how it succeeded. Once mounted, though with the pistol bullets of Lance Frampton whistling about his ears, and he felt his strength and courage equally increase

He never thought to return to the cottage. He felt very sure that it would soon have a score of visiters. He had striven hard for disguise and concealment, but his instinct taught him that he would be suspected. The neighborhood would be quite too hot, in a few hours, for his safety. He gave it a wide berth, accordingly, and making a circuit, which carried him far above the miserable hovel which his family occupied, he proceeded to descend the country, making an oblique progress toward the Edisto. —Let us return to Porgy and his party.

CHAPTER XXXV.

HOW MILLHOUSE REBUKES THE EXTRAVAGANCE OF PORGY.

The poor woman, the wife of the squatter, was half-scared to death when she saw the squad of our partisans approach her dwelling. She at once conjectured that the squatter had been at his old tricks, and that the enemy was upon his footsteps. Cadaverously pale, trembling in every limb, she staggered to her bedside, and sank upon it, faintly exclaiming as they approached the house—

"Oh! Dory, they've come after him."

"Lie down, mother, and let me speak to the gentlemen," said the little girl.

"You, Dory! oh, no! You remember he told me, you were not to speak at all. Come back from the door, I tell you. Don't you say a word."

"But you musn't look so scared, mother. They'll think something wrong if you're so pale and trembling. Don't be afeard. —We haven't done anything wrong, and we don't know anything of father's doings."

"Hush, child, you musn't be talking. There they come. Oh! my God, what is to become of us?"

"Don't be afeard mother! God won't let them hurt us."

"Oh! how do you know, Dory?"

"I believe, mother."

"Believe! oh! yes, you'll believe anything, even though the soldiers kill us and carry us to prison. Come back from the door, I tell you. I'll open it. I'll answer all they ax."

The child drew away, and rested her elbows upon the table, as the party approached the house. A rather heavy knock, thrice repeated, threw the mother into a new passion of terror. She wrung her hands.

"Lord have mercy! What shall we do?"

"Open the door, mother, or let me do it. I'm sure these people ain't going to hurt us. One of them is Mr. Fordham, and he's a good man, you know."

"Mr. Fordham, is it?" in a whisper, and, somewhat reassured, rising and smoothing her apron. "To be sure, Mr. Fordham's always been our friend."

Another knock, and the voice of Fordham—

"It's me—it's a friend, Mrs. Bostwick."

The poor woman took courage. The door was opened, and Fordham, without, stood in front of the party. He had alighted from his steed, and held him by the bridle. Porgy was in the act of letting himself down; a performance, with him, usually to be classed among his most deliberate acts. Millhouse kept his saddle. The negroes were grouped in the rear. It was a most formidable party, still, in the eyes of the squatter's wife. The girl, Dory, looked on with some curiosity, but with the saddest possible look of resignation. Porgy and Fordham threw the bridles of their steeds to the negroes, and proceeded to enter the dwelling at the invitation of the hostess, who was tremulous with solicitude.

"This is Captain Porgy, Mrs. Bostwick—perhaps you may remember him before he went into the army."

"I've seed the captain," said she humbly, "but can't say that I should recollect him."

"Very likely, my dear madam," responded the captain courteously, taking off his cap, and entering. "In the last five years I've grown out of my own knowledge—one of the few men of the army, madam, who fattened on starvation. Your daughter, Mrs Bostwick."

"Dory, sir, my oldest."

Dory! Is that her name?"

"For short, captain. Her given name is Dorothy.'

Porgy took the offered hand of the child, and looked to Fordham significantly. Fordham nodded his apparent affirmation.—Porgy, still holding the child's hand, proceeded to seat himself on a chair which the officious hands of Mrs. Bostwick put beside him. Dory had already perused the lines of his countenance, which, not wanting in manly beauty, though with some defects, was at the same time benevolent and even tender in expression. His eyes, small, but full of life, were also distinguished by good nature, and his mouth was similarly marked. The child felt at ease as she surveyed his face. A single glance sufficed for this. He was no ruffian, that she felt sure; that he was a gentleman by birth and education, her instincts at once assured her. The fact was sufficiently proved by the ease with which he inspired confidence in both mother and daughter. Our captain was quite as observant of Dory's features as she had been of his. The singular beauty of the child struck him at a glance, and compelled consideration. She resembled her mother very little. Who could she resemble? Was her father's face like hers? Could that ruffian and outlaw wear anything in his countenance, like the serene sweetness, the ethereal loveliness that formed the life of that pale but glowing aspect? The thing was impossible. The conjecture was expelled from his thought the moment it sought to enter.

Meanwhile, Fordham had broached the special object of their visitation to the anxious woman, by asking for the whereabouts of her husband. Her apprehensions were renewed; her tremors became visible. Dory struggled out of the hands of Porgy, and immediately placed herself beside her mother. The action and its motive, so prompt and so instinctive, at once afforded to our captain a clew to the strong moral courage and propriety of the child. The question of Fordham showed the visit to be one of *quasi* hostility. The party was to be confronted, not embraced. The mother, in her moment of danger, must have the full support of her children. They were not to give countenance to those who threatened a father's safety, however erring. Of course, such thoughts as these formed no argument for the unripened mind of the child; but the unerring instincts of a rightly placed, and rightly sympathetic heart, sufficed to bring about

the instant conviction just as certainly as if it had been produced by thought and reason. Porgy saw it all.

"Come back to me, Dory," said he mildly, extending his hand. "You are not afraid of me?"

She looked into his face, and immediately returned to him. Confidence was reinspired in consequence of the sudden activity of other instincts; and the captain had her again, a moment after, seated upon his knee. In the meanwhile, it was apparent that Mrs. Bostwick either would not, or could not, give any account of her husband. She was evidently greatly frightened, answered wildly, and was seemingly so much distressed, that Porgy interposed for her relief.

"It does not matter, Fordham. Mrs. Bostwick evidently knows nothing of her husband—and we know nothing, Mrs. Bostwick; but we thought it possible that he might, from his knowledge of the people of the country, and the country itself, put us on the track of a band of outlaws who were guilty of a great outrage yesterday."

"Yesterday, captain?" asked the woman in renewed terror, and looking wildly to Dory.

"Yes, madam, yesterday! They waylaid that excellent lady, Mrs. Eveleigh, her son and Mr. Fordham; seized them; tied the lady to her carriage, captured her wagon, and no doubt would have robbed and killed all the party, if I had not providentially come to their rescue, with a few friends, at the last moment."

"Lord save us! and yesterday!"

"We defeated the ruffians, and four of them were slain."

"Oh! my God! Did I ever——!"

"We captured their horses; yet, such was the audacity of the surviving ruffians, that they ventured, one or more of them, even to my dwelling last night, and carried off one of the best of the captured horses."

"You don't say?"

"Yes, madam; a large raw-boned black!"

"A black!" and the conscious mother grew paler, and looked to Dory. The child was pale also but the features were motionless. They said nothing.

"Now, Mrs. Bostwick, we thought that your husband might possibly——"

"Oh! I'm sure, captain, he don't know nothing about it. He's had no horse for a year, that I've seed, and where he is, there's no telling. It ain't often we sees him at home. He's away all the time, ontell his own children hardly knows him when he comes."

Porgy looked into Dory's face with an expression that won the child's sympathies at once. His look, involuntarily seemed to say, "Can it be possible that he is indifferent to such a dear innocent, such a pure, bright bud of the wilderness as this?" But he said nothing, and suffered the mother to proceed in a series of rambling denials and disclosures which only served to prove to both Porgy and Fordham, that the woman really knew more of the husband and his recent operations than she so solemnly declared. Of course, neither of them suspected her of any share in his proceedings, or any sympathy with them. Fordham had already put our partisan right in his estimate of the existing relations between husband and wife, and of the humble heart and honest character of the latter.

The overseer, baffled in his effort to ascertain from the mother anything with regard to the recent visits of the squatter, now addressed himself to the daughter.

"And when did you see your daddy last, Dory?"

The child turned her eyes quietly to the querist, but before she could reply, Porgy exclaimed—

"No! no! Fordham! That won't do! Enough! If Mrs. Bostwick don't know, and hasn't seen, how should the little girl? But I have some questions to ask you, Dory, and you must answer me.

And he looked into her eyes with a look which taught her that there was no snare, no danger.

"You spin, I hear, Dory, and weave, and knit, and sew, and do a great many clever things. Now I'm in great want of sewing, spinning, weaving, and knitting. I want woollen cloth, and cotton cloth, and thread, Dory, and a great supply of stockings. See what a big foot I've got—*two* feet, you see, and both of them are in great straits for want of clothing. Will you knit for me, Dory, and spin for me, when I beg you? I shall want

both you and your mother's help in fitting up my poor establishment. I am no longer a soldier; and am about to become a planter again, and you know what a planter wants. Now, my dear, to begin — I must have as many pair of stockings as mamma and yourself can knit for me between this and July. And you must let me pay you for them in advance, that I may make sure that you will do the work. Here, take this, Dory," thrusting a guinea into her hand, "and here is a kiss by way of seal to the contract."

The little girl took the money without a word, but her eyes instantly filled with tears, and she suffered her head to decline on Porgy's shoulder. He kissed her again, and put her down, and she immediately walked across the room to her mother, and laid the guinea in her lap, and stood, during the rest of the visit, with her hand leaning on her mother's chair. The good woman was loud in her acknowledgments.

"God bless you, sir," she said, "you're very good to us. Dory shall work for you; she kin knit jest as well as I."

"*She* must do my stockings," quoth Porgy, "only she. You mus'n't touch them. I must have the satisfaction, when I wear them, of knowing that she made them. I shall find work for you, too, Mrs. Bostwick. You shall hear from me when I want you. Good-by, ma'am; you are a good woman, and ought to be more comfortable in the world. Good-by, Dory; don't forget me."

The child came up, and offered him her hand, which he took, then stooping, kissed her again, took a respectful leave of the mother, and led the way out of the house. Fordham followed, but not before the wife of the squatter contrived to say:—

"Oh! Mr. Fordham, tell Mrs. Eveleigh, that I'm so sorry she was robbed and troubled on the road. I'm so very sorry."

And she looked as if she felt that she herself was greatly to blame in the matter; thus satisfying the shrewd overseer that she was well aware of, or at least suspected, her husband's share in the transaction. When they had mounted their horses, and were out of hearing of the house, Fordham said to Porgy:—

"Ef you hadn't stopped me, captain, I reckon we'd ha' got out o' Dory all about her father's coming, ef so be he had been there."

"Yes," answered Porgy, "or she would have been made to lie about it, and would thus have spoiled the prettiest mouth in the world. No! no! Fordham. We must not demand of the child the evidence against the parent. I was not unwilling that you should ask the mother; though after the thing was begun, I felt that there was a degree of meanness about it, which made me feel a little ashamed. Still it was desirable to have the truth, and the wife of such a husband, might be supposed to be somewhat used to lying for him, and to be a little blunted in her sensibilities. But that child. She is the very picture of innocence as well as loveliness. Isn't it a wonderful thing that such a child should be born to such parents. How strangely will the perfect plant, the most beautiful flower, exquisite in excellence, and admirable in hues, spring up on the common dunghill. She ought to be plucked from it with all haste, and reared in a garden to herself.

Fordham could not altogether perceive the propriety of Porgy's refinements. He thought his philosophy a little too strained for common use, but he was silenced by it. But Porgy was not to get off so easily. He was now grappled with by no less a person than his sergeant, Millhouse, who, sitting on horseback, at the entrance, throughout the interview, had been a curious but silent spectator of the scene. He suddenly turned upon his superior, and said:—

"Cappin, you gin a guinea to the gal to make you stockings! a whole guinea!"

"To be sure! Well! what of it, Millhouse?"

"Why, Lord love you, cappin, that ought to buy stockings enough for a regiment. Why four shillings would git you as many for your own wear, as would last you from now to Christmas."

"Very likely, Millhouse. But, in truth, I did not give the guinea for the stockings. I gave it for the child to buy her own stockings, if need be, or whatever else she needs. I gave it from my heart, Millhouse, and not from my pocket."

"Oh! ay! I see! It was a sort of charity then, cappin."

"Well, I suppose you may call it so."

"Of course, there's no *eend* to the supply where that came from! Lord be marciful to them who ain't marciful to them-

selves! You'll want all of them guineas before long. But I reckon you've had jist sich a dream as poor 'Lisha Dayton, that s'arved with us at Georgetown, and was killed at that blasted skrimmage at Quinby, where we lost so many good fellows."

"And what sort of dream had Elisha?"

"Why you see, 'Lisha was always dreaming of good luck and finding fortunes, though poor fellow, he had precious small chances of luck at any time that ever I heard tell of. But when we were at camp 'pon the High Hills, he somehow got hold of a pair of pretty good boots, a leetle worn only, that he tuk from a British ensign that he brought down with a bullet on a scout. The boots was too fine for 'Lisha to wear, so he agreed to sell them to Lieutenant Withers for nine shillings, in the raal silver. The boots were worth a great deal more, but that was all the money the lieutenant had, and there was nobody else about that had any. So 'Lisha 'greed to take the nine shillings; and with that money jingling in his pockets, the poor fellow thought he'd got the world itself in a string, and the two eends of the string both in his own fingers. He thought so much about it that he was constantly dreaming of buried money and all sorts of great discoveries. One day he come to me; says he—'Millhouse, I've had the same dream three nights running. It must be true. I'm sure on it. It's of a great heap of money buried on the Block House Hill. I seed the hill in my dream, and the very trees, jest how they stand, above the place where the money lies. I wants you to go with me and git it.' Says I, 'I don't b'lieve in dreams.' Says he, 'But this is a true one. I'd take bible oath on it, I'm sure. And ef you'll go with me and help dig, and let nobody else know, I'll give you a whole quarter of the pile, and the pile is a mighty big one.' Says I, ''Lisha, them dreams is only making a great fool of you.' And then he swore, and he was so sart'in sure of it, and he begged so hard with me to go and help him, that I concluded to go; but says I, ''Lisha, as I tell you, I don't b'lieve in dreams, and if you'll agree to give me them nine shillings, in hand, that you're a jingling in your pocket now, I'll give up the quarter that you offer me out of the buried pile.' When he heard that, he was a leettle slow to answer. 'Then,' says I, 'you don't b'lieve in your own dreams arter all.'

Then he swore a most outrageous big oath, and he said, 'It's a bargain.' So I made him give up the shillings, and I jingled 'em in my pockets all the way we went; and he pushed fora'd, pretty fast ahead, for now he didn't seem to like the sound the shillings made when they were in my pocket and not his own. We had both of us pick and shovels, and sure enough he led 'zactly to the place as he seed it in his dream; and the 'tarnal fool had gone there before mid-day by his own self. 'Well,' says I, ''Lisha, where shill we strike?' 'Thar,' said he, 'that's the 'zact place.' And into it I went with the pick. And into it he went, like a strong man. And we picked the earth loose, and the roots, and we shovelled and threw out the naked yellow clay, jest as God had put it there, maybe, a million of hundred years before, until we both sweated like an overseer's horse in fly-time. At the eend of two of the longest hours I ever know'd in my life, 'Lisha jumped out of the hole, and says he with a laugh, 'What a blasted fool I am to b'lieve in a d——d dream!' 'So you are,' says I. 'It's no use,' says he, 'there's no pile to share. I see it now. And so, as there's no treasure, Millhouse,' says he—the bloody fool!—'you must give me back my shillings.' And as he said, I jest dropped pick and spade, and put my fingers to the corner of my eyes, and I said, 'Look here, 'Lisha, ef you sees gooseberries any where in them two eyes.' 'Why,' says he, 'as we hain't found any money, you ain't guine to keep my shillings?' 'Ain't I then,' says I. 'The speculation in the dream, was your own, 'Lisha, and I worked only for the sartainty of the thing. You kin keep the pile when you find it, but I'll keep the pile I've found already; and I confess to you, 'Lisha, I'm better pleased to dig for my money in a fool's pocket, than in the side of a d——d hard clay hill like this!' Lord! how he did rip and tear, curse and swear; but 'twant no use. I had the shillings, and he soon l'arned that it would call for bigger curses than was in his body, to draw the shiners out of my pockets. He gin it up at last, and then I said to him 'you ain't fit to keep money, 'Lisha, but I won't be hard upon you. Here's three of your shillings back, jest enough for you to jingle. They'll make all the music you desarves to hear."

And, at the close, the recollection of his achievement prompted

a glorious burst of cacchination from the throat of our military financier.

"A good story, Millhouse, and excellently told," quoth Porgy; "and, pray, how will you apply it to our present purpose?"

"Why, easy enough, cappin! Don't you see, ef you've got a dream like 'Lishe Dayton, of a pile of treasure somewhar' to be got only for the diggin', t'wont be *on*reasonable or *on*righteous, if you let me jingle in my pockets the rest of them guineas in your'n."

"Humph!" muttered Porgy; "it would, perhaps, be just as well, Millhouse, if I did; but, with your permission, I'll wait for the dream. Be sure of this, my good fellow, that while you wield pick and shovel, in getting in my treasure, you shall be quite welcome to share my shillings, nor shall I envy you their jingle."

"Don't I know that, cappin? 'Taint for myself I'm a-speaking, but jest for you and your gettings, I'm afeard you'll want every guinea that you waste."

"Don't mistake, Millhouse. I waste no guineas. When I give money, it is only that I may get a good interest for it. The true man, Millhouse does not live by money, nor by that which money will always buy—bread and meat. There is still better food than that for which I more hunger; and yet I know not the man living who has a better appetite for good living than myself."

Fordham had been a quiet listener to this conversation, and seemingly quite an interested one, but he now arrested it by recurring to what had been one of the objects of the expedition—to find, if possible, the route which the outlaw had taken who had carried off the horse.

"There's no tracks," said he, "about the cabin, only those made by our own horses. I reckon he hain't been to see his family on horseback; though I'm thinking his old woman has seed him sence the attack yisterday. She show'd it by the scare we gin her. He's not gone back after he got the horse. He's too 'cute for that. We shan't see him back, in these parts, I'm a-thinking, till its all pretty much blown over."

Still the search was made. The party traversed the region, along all the avenues which it was possible for the outlaw to pur-

sue, assuming him to have steered for the cottage. But they found no traces. And this was no vague search. Nobody, who does not know the woodman of the South, can conceive the excellence of his eye in discovering the slightest traces upon the ground, or through the forest, of the objects which he pursues. On horseback, at a smart canter, he will pull up, dismount, and show you where the deer or turkey has gone by, perhaps the night before. He can, with very great approach to certainty, say what interval has elapsed since the passage of the prey. His instincts are those of the Indian. Taught in the same school, his eye and ear are wonderfully keen, quick, and discriminating. Knowing the qualities of our woodmen, the report of Fordham, Frampton, or Millhouse, on matters of this sort, would always be quite conclusive to our captain of partisans. But it was sunset before the scouting was arrested. A little after that period, they reached the dwelling of Porgy, and Fordham was readily persuaded to stay to supper.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

PLAY AND PAY.

It does not need that we should accompany the Squatter, Bostwick, on his course to and along the Edisto, pursuing the downward route until it brought him within sight of the ocean. Enough that we find him there in safety after a little interval of time.—But there was one adventure, however, which occurred to him on the road, and within seven or eight miles only of the spot where he had engaged to meet with M'Kewn, and to bring the negroes and the papers, should he prove successful in his attempt upon the cavalcade of the widow Eveleigh. Stopping at a hovel on the roadside, for refreshment, he was surprised to come upon the fellow, Tony Hines, the only other surviving member of the gang which he led on that occasion. Tony, it will be remembered, had succeeded in saving himself, when pursued by Porgy and Corporal Millhouse, by taking to the swamp fastnesses before the two

partisans had got within striking distance. His terrors in the flight had been such as to prompt him to such desperate efforts as to kill his horse; when he resumed farther flight on foot, never stopping on his downward route until it became physically impossible to proceed farther.

Flight, fatigue, the want of food, and perhaps an already diseased condition of the body, had resulted in a burning fever, and, in utter exhaustion, he had sought shelter and succor in a cabin whose inmates could afford but little of either. It was here that Bostwick found him stretched on a miserable pallet of straw in a state of extreme suffering. Physic and physicians were not to be had in that sparsely-settled region. The patient died or lived according to the strength of his constitution, or the decree of Providence. "Yairb [herb] tea," was the only remedy of the poor and simple population, and of this sylvan remedy, the good woman of the hovel was willing to provide any quantity, and did pour it down the throat of the sick man, till he turned from her with loathing; and he hailed the appearance of Bostwick with a yell of delight, as it seemed to promise him what the old people had denied — a draught of cold water. Bostwick would have supplied him from the bucket, but the old woman interposed with hands and tongue.

"It'll be the death of him, stranger. It'll check the perspiration, and give him a chill to kill him."

"Let my old woman alone," quoth the husband; "she knows how to doctor fever."

And the squatter withheld the beverage from the burning lips of the patient.

"But what in the world's name brought you here, Tony?" Bostwick curiously demanded. Rogues are naturally suspicious of each other, and, finding the fugitive directly on the route to the secret place of meeting with M'Kewn, and only a few miles from it, the squatter began to conjecture that there had been some connection between the two, which had been withheld from him. — M'Kewn, so far as he knew, had never seen Tony. He had also been earnest in his injunctions to keep his creatures from all knowledge of the party by whom he had been employed. The squatter, fully assured of the dishonest and deceitful character of M'Kewn, now strove by a series of circuitous inquiries to

probe the fugitive outlaw, and it was only after a long cross-examination, carried on with very excellent skill, that he arrived at the conclusion, that in taking the route which he had pursued, Tony had no other purpose than that of throwing as much breadth of swamp and forest between himself and his pursuers, as was possible, and that he really knew nothing of the Scotchman.

Satisfied finally of this, the squatter promised to do for him what he could; to try and procure physic and assistance; and, commending him to nature and the old people who sheltered him, left him to the chapter of accidents. We must not suppose that he abandoned him indifferently. It was not in his power, in fact, to give him either help or consolation. He knew of no remedies, being one of that class of persons who never had leisure for sickness. Nor, even if succor could have been bought, had he the means in money for the purchase. He had left behind him, in his cypress hollow, the strong-box of Mrs. Eveleigh, with all his ill-gotten treasure, as well as the much-valued paper. A few shillings sufficed him for the expenses of the route, and he looked for the replenishing of his purse to the meeting with M'Kewn. He left his comrade accordingly, but not without promising to bring him medicine and money on his return, which he told him would not be long delayed. When he got to the place appointed for his meeting with M'Kewn, the latter had not yet made his appearance; but he was soon joined by Barton and Drummond, persons of the brotherhood, who acted as agents for M'Kewn, and who shared his spoils. They reported the transport sloop to be in waiting, standing off and on, and to be brought in, in a couple of hours, by a signal which had been agreed on with the captain.

"But where's the niggers, Bostwick?" demanded Drummond.

"Niggers?"

"Yes; M'Kewn expected you to bring down fifteen or twenty."

"M'Kewn expects other men to do things he kaint do himself."

"Why, that's pretty much the way with most people. But have you got any?"

"Well, we must talk over them things another time. I must eat and drink now. I'm a'most famished. I haint had a decent mouthful of anything for three days."

"The devil! Well, we can provide you. We're well off here. Plenty of the good stuff—raal Jamaica, and as much grub as would feed a regiment. Let's be off to the castle."

"Castle!"

"Ay, what you may call a castle, it's so hard to be got at; but if you look for anything better than a canvass tent, in a deep swamp, you're dreaming to no purpose. Come along. Barton will stay here and meet M'Kewn, and bring him along. He'll be here after nightfall."

Drummond, one of the confederates, was the speaker, and he led the way, on foot, to his swamp castle, which lay deeply imbedded in tangled thickets near one of the mouths of the Edisto. —Bostwick kept on horseback as long as he could. A few minutes riding lost them the cool, fresh breezes of the sea. Soon, they were buried in a dense region in which the air seemed to sleep like a lake in the hollows of the mountains. But the change was not a disagreeable one at that season of the year. In a little while, ignorant of the locality, you would have fancied yourself anywhere but near the ocean, all was so still, so utterly confined and shut in, and with the horizon within finger-reach. A blind path showed the way imperfectly, winding circuitously through lagune and thicket. At length, the two ascended a slight elevation, and, through the shrubbery, Bostwick caught glimpses of the dingy canvass which formed the tent of the confederates. They were now within the walls of "the castle;" a castle, indeed, of a magnificence such as the works of art, in the hands of man, has never yet displayed. The bank upon which the tent stood was crowned with aged oaks, that spread themselves out like great green canopies, covering all within their reach, their white beards trailing to the earth, or sweeping in the wind, like those of the Druid Bards, howling their songs of hate and death in the ears of the tyrant Edward, as described in the much undervalued ode of Gray—a production very far superior, in all poetic respects, to the over-lauded elegy of the same writer. Our live oaks are certainly patriarchal presences when we find them of an age beyond the memory of man. These, in the castled keep of our confederates, almost within sight of the ocean, and within the influence of its salt atmosphere, would have thrown into comparative insignificance, the "castled crags of

Drachenfell's," placed in close neighborhood with them. But they were not alone. If the oak is the Druid priest, the ancient patriarch, the Magnolia is the crowned king of the forest. There were three of these sovereign forms within thirty feet of each other, and alternating among the oaks, on the bank where the tent of the outlaws—for such, in fact, they were—had been raised. Not one of these trees was less than a hundred and fifty feet in height, their great shafts rising up like columns, straight as an arrow, and bare of foliage for more than a hundred feet, then swelling into a mighty crown of green, darkly bright, which the hands of May would enliven, not enrich, with the purest of her great white flowers. Myrtle and cane, the honeysuckle and jessamine, and dog-wood, not yet in bloom, or even brightening, grew, and were gladdened in the shadow of these protecting potentates; while the billows of the sea, at the height of the tide, wound in among the creeks, and freshened the hollows, even to the roots of these princes of the forest, whom they were insidiously to undermine in season.

But the squatter had no eye for these objects. With him, as with most of the ignorant, a tree is a tree only; and in a region which boasts of such a wilderness of trees, the most noble is but little valued—is cut down and cast into the fire without remorse on the smallest occasion. Bostwick regarded the natural aspects of the spot only with reference to their uses for the shelter of the fugitive. He was not insensible to this feature of the 'castle.'—But the tent and what it contained more certainly appealed to his tastes. He was conducted into it by Drummond. Here they found an old negro woman, a withered crone of sixty, who appeared to busy herself in cleaning pots and rinsing kettles. Of these utensils there may have been half-a-dozen strewed about. There was no table, or chair, or bed in the tent, but one or two boxes, and a pile of cloaks and blankets, served to show how the inmates garmented themselves for sleeping. A capacious jug was visible, standing on the ground, which Drummond bade the old woman replenish with fresh water. A neighboring spring enabled her to do this in a few seconds, for the woman was brisk though old, and moved about with very juvenile celerity. Whether through love or terror, her rulers had taught her equal docility and activity. When she returned with the water, Drum-

mond threw open the box, and revealed several huge square bottles of Jamaica,—the great liquor of the low country during this period, and for a goodly time after.

To drink, was a thing of course. It was the initiatory process in those days of all society, high and low, of the palace and the hovel. Bostwick enjoyed the double advantage of an incorrigible head and an eager taste. He was one not easily satisfied, and not easily suffering. Drummond was by no means a milk-sop either, and the draught was repeated no less than three times in the half hour which the two employed, cast upon the earth, and chatting together, we may suppose, of the joys of knavery, and the luxury of sin. After a while, Barton made his appearance, just about dark. He was followed by a couple of sailors bringing in fish. Candles were lighted within the tent, and a fire was kindled without. Around this, the woman proceeded to prepare supper.

"I wonder what keeps M'Kewn?" queried Bostwick.

"Oh! he'll be here directly. 'Taint time for him yet. But let's be doing something till supper is ready."

"Well, I'm consenting," replied Bostwick, readily comprehending what the something meant. "Hev' you any *books?*"

Books meant cards in the vernacular of the forest.

"We'd be without our salvation if we hadn't," was the answer of Barton. Drummond, meanwhile, pulled out from the fathomless bowels of the box, a paper containing several well-thumbed packs.

It is curious that all primitive periods, in all countries, are distinguished by the passions for gaming and drinking, and by such a degree of invention as will enable men to gratify both. The fact illustrates the necessity of the race for mental exercise, and for the excitement of the nervous system. And this is in what we vulgarly and ignorantly call a state of nature, as if man, who is a born creature of art, ever knew such a condition, in the sense in which nature is commonly understood. But we must not philosophize, having to deal with our present company.

"What shall be the *marks?*" demanded Drummond, throwing himself down beside the two, and spreading the cards before them.

"Ontell I see M'Kewn, and git some money, I shill have to run upon mighty small marks, I tell you," was Bostwick's an-

swer, drawing forth the few shillings that remained in his pocket, and detaching a single one from the rest.

"Well, *it is* a small p'int," quoth Barton.

"But when a man kaint run, you must let him walk," answered Bostwick, taking up the cards and proceeding to shuffle. The other two put up their shillings. In those days the moral and philosophical games of brag and poker, now the favorites where the shillings are forthcoming, were not known among the people. It had not then been reduced to a science, the study of one's moods at play—a study upon which success at Brag and Poker so much depends. The ordinary game with the "little dogs," was one still known and still reasonably practised among this class under the several names of old-sledge, seven-up, all-fours, &c.; and on the present occasion it was adopted tacitly, not a word being said to decide the point on either hand. The squatter, like most of his class, was an adept at this play; not only knew the game well, but had little adroitnesses which increased the *science*, and sometimes remedied the deficiencies of fortune. He could make the trump, and cut the jack—when not too impertinently watched—almost at his pleasure. The only qualification to this merit, was in the fact that it was shared in pretty nearly the same degree, by his associates. They were well matched, and, this being the case, but little room was left to either *to play the knave*, out of his turn. They were in the midst of the play when M'Kewn entered.

"I'm mighty glad you've come, M'Kewn," was the abrupt and somewhat irreverent address of the squatter, "es I'm jest in want of the shillings. These chaps here hev' pretty nigh *dreaned* me of all I had."

"And a small *all* at that," laughed Drummond.

"A man's *all* is enough for him to lose at any time," muttered the squatter, as Drummond took up his last shilling. "I'm a-looking to you, M'Kewn?"—and he extended his open palm. His manner was such as to impress the Scotchman with the notion that his more important game had been successful; and, though the familiarity of the squatter had now began to grate upon his sense of the more dignified position to which he was rising in the world, he yet, with a good-natured sarcasm, handing him some money as he spoke, replied—

"I should like to know, Bostwick, when you'll cease to look to me?"

"Well, there's no knowing; when I've done with you I reckon."

"Or I with you," responded the other, *sotto voce;* and the look which spoke to the squatter at the same time, seemed to say that there should be no long delay in cutting the connection, the present affairs being finally adjusted. Bostwick grinned. The parties knew one another and were fairly matched.

"Why, what's this, M'Kewn?" growled the squatter, as he looked at the handful of coin, which the former had given him. "Nothing but silver, and pretty much shillings and sixpences all."

"What would you have, man? You're betting shillings only."

"That's only bekase I had nothing better, and I must make up my losses by tall betting. Give us some gould, kain't you?"

The humor of the request did not seem favorably to impress M'Kewn; but it was one which he was not prepared to combat openly at present. Nay, the very confidence with which the application was made, seemed to say—I know how largely you owe me for my services.—He handed the squatter three guineas.

"'Twon't do, now, M'Kewn. Make it ten. Don't be splitting the hoecake too thin."

"Wait till you lose them before you ask for more."

"But I ain't a-guine to lose 'em; and its bekase I'm guine to win now, that I want to go to tall betting.—There!" said he to Drummond and Barton, and clapping down the handful of small silver that he had received from M'Kewn, "plank down agin the heap, both on you."

The money was counted, and each of the challenged parties faced it with a like sum. M'Kewn, gazing on the squatter, could not keep from showing, in his face, the feeling of scorn and disgust which he entertained for him. The latter saw the expression of his countenance, and read its full meaning. His own glance, in reply, was one of mixed bitterness and derision. The play, meanwhile went on. The parties played as unconcernedly as if nothing were at stake. Practice had indurated them. Barton was drowsy, to all appearance, but keenly vigilant. Drummond was gay and garrulous, but not a point of the game escaped him; while the squatter, seemingly reckless and indifferent at the same time, was saying to himself, "Those

skunks would steal the eyes out of a body's head if he'd let 'em. But I knows 'em." M'Kewn seated himself upon the chest, and gazed upon the three in silence. In a few minutes Drummond cried out—

"Seven up! That's into you, Bost!" and he raked up the two piles with the coolness of one spooning up his uncooled broth. The action was followed by the squatter casting down the three gold pieces which he had just got from M'Kewn. The latter started up.

"What!" cried he, "you don't mean to stake the three upon the game?"

"Why not, Squar?" answered the squatter.

"The devil! And you expect my pockets to keep you supplied?"

"In course!" was the cool rejoinder.

The Scotchman jumped up, hurried to the entrance of the tent, walked out, was gone a moment, then returned and took his seat upon the chest. It was not long before Barton gathered up the stakes.

"Luck's ag'in me," quoth Bostwick, "but every road I ever seed has a turn somewhere. I must hev' the guineas, M'Kewn."

And, without looking round, he extended his open palm to the person he addressed.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

BREWAGE OF BITTER BEVERAGE AMONG THE BRETHREN.

M'Kewn started to his feet.

"What, the devil?" he exclaimed, "do you suppose I'm made out of gold?"

"If you was, how I should like the k'ining of you," responded the squatter with a rare coolness.

"Hark ye, Bostwick, do you mean that I'm to find you guineas for you to stake by the handful on a rascally game of cards?"

"In course! But old-sledge ain't a rascally game, M'Kewn. It's a mighty fine game, I tell you, and takes a mighty smart

sort of person to play it now. I reckon, ef so be luck wasn't always agin me, I could beat you from Monday morning to Sunday night, and never stop once to pray. Fork over now, sensible, M'Kewn, and don't keep the boys waiting. Five guineas will do."

"I must see you first."

"Oh! there's no seeing about it. I'm here. You see me, I reckon. I'm alive and kicking—pretty sprigh too, all things considerent. I've been a-working in your business; that's enough. Hand up the gould, and shet up."

M'Kewn seemed disposed to show obduracy. He rose and again sat down, and, all the while, the hand of the squatter was stretched out before him, the fingers working toward the palm. Bostwick was playing more games than one. It was with the most desperate reluctance that M'Kewn conceded the demand, and flung down five pieces of gold upon the ground between the players.

"Let it lie thar'," quoth Bostwick, "and kiver it, boys, if you dare!"

M'Kewn started up, almost furious.

"Bostwick, I warn you."

"Oh! warn be d——d! I know's what I'm about, M'Kewn. It's my money now, and I've the right to use it jest as I chooses. Are you down, honeys?"

"Faced, full point, Bost," answered Drummond. And fifteen guineas formed the pile. M'Kewn tried to look on, but couldn't endure it long. He darted up, and sallied out of the tent. When he returned, the whole pile belonged to the squatter, and his opponents were compelled to plead for a mitigation of stakes. The stakes were now of silver.

"It feels so mean!" quoth the squatter, "to git back to white money, after ye've had sich a pleasant feel of the yallow. But I'm agreeable to anything."

And he dealt out the cards, threw up a knave, and ran out the game in a jiffy, gathering up the sixpences with the air of a man who is half disposed to regard the act as more troublesome than compensative. A stop was put to the game by a call to supper. Suppose this performance to be achieved, and the parties satisfied, and the things removed.

"Well, honeys," said the squatter, with still increasing audacity, "whenever the feeling of old-sledge comes strong upon you, I'm the man to say, h'ist away! I don't want to be carrying off your gould chickens, ef you're the men to call 'em back to the old roost."

"Work before play," interposed M'Kewn. "We've got something to do, I think, and the sooner we set about it the better."

"Well! I don't know what *you've* got to do, M'Kewn," coolly rejoined the squatter, "but ef you hev' anything on hand to trouble you, the sooner you get at it, the better. But my work's done for this time, I reckon, and I'll play tell all splits,—ontell I kin get another job that's profitable."

"You forget, you have not made your report about the last job. You want your pay without performance. But you don't get another stiver from me until I know what's been done. I must be satisfied."

"And so you shall, soon enough, ef anything kin satisfy you. But there's time enough. Let us play awhile. I'm in for luck now, and I ain't guine to lose the chance."

"Let him git rid of his guineas, M'Kewn," quoth Drummond. "They burn in his pocket. He won't be easy till he empties it."

"And then he'll not be easy till he fills it again," answered M'Kewn angrily. "Don't I know him?"

"Ef you does, you knows a man that, when he's done his work, must hev' his rest," answered the squatter, with an air of savage doggedness. "Look you, M'Kewn, when you knows all, you'll wonder I ain't a tiger, or, it mout be, some worser wild beast than that."

"Eh!" exclaimed M'Kewn, with a stare.

"Yes! You may say 'eh!' and look wild. But I've seed sights to make a man think of hell, and worse places."

"Come out with me, Bostwick, and tell me all!"

"I ain't guine to talk about it 'tell I'm ready. Wait awhile.—Let's play,—all of us."

"Play!" said M'Kewn. "I'm in no humor for play."

"*En* I'm in no humor for work," retorted the squatter.

"We'll play awhile," said Drummond to M'Kewn, with an appealing look; at the same time, turning to the chest, he motioned

M'Kewn to rise, and drew from it a huge black bottle of Jamaica. "A drink all round before we play."

"I'm agreeable to that!" answered the squatter; and the cups were filled in a twinkling. Bostwick drained the fiery liquid in its native state, disdaining the qualifying aid of water. All drank, M'Kewn barely tasting the beverage. His one virtue of sobriety, by the way, served to increase greatly the potency of his vices. —He still refused to play, but sat down sullenly observing the others.

"I'm for small points," said Barton, putting up a single guinea. "I'll not drain my pockets in one fling to pleasure any man."

"Scared!" grinned the squatter.

"Well, a man might jest as well be, dealing with such a born devil for gambling as you, Bostwick."

The squatter's self-esteem was gratified. He gave a chuckle; and, hauling out all his guineas, raised them in a pile beside him. One of them was put up to suit the resources of his comrades. They played. Luck still attended him; and he was the winner of game after game, until, at a significant glance from M'Kewn, Drummond and Barton both declared themselves penniless.

"Git more!" roared the squatter. "Borrow! Thar's M'Kewn.'

"I don't lend a penny!" shouted the Scotchman.

"And I won't borrow," said Drummond, governed by the evident wishes of M'Kewn, rather than by any scruples of his own.

"Nor I!" echoed Barton. "It's only to lose. You've sold your soul to the devil, Bostwick."

"And a devilish bad bargain the devil has made of it," muttered M'Kewn, "if he gave five shillings for the stuff."

"I reckon that's jest the price you put on your own soul, M'Kewn," was the sarcasm of the squatter; and, growing more audacious, he added, "and ef old Satan be the cunning chap that people thinks him, he'd not be apt to buy it at any price. It'll come to him some day, of its own free will, at no cost at all."

M'Kewn looked more and more savage. His face had actually grown livid as he listened to the increasing insolence of the squatter. Hitherto, the creature, though apt sometimes to say an impertinent thing, had never shown any such consistent purpose of doing so. M'Kewn could only account for it, by supposing such a degree of success, on the part of the squatter, in

his late operations, as had stimulated his *amour propre* to a degree even beyond the control of his fears or judgment. This being the case, M'Kewn was willing to tolerate a great deal; but his pride chafed greatly at the necessity of doing so, and what was contempt before, in the feeling which he entertained for the miserable wretch whom his cupidity had employed, was rising absolutely into a sentiment of hatred. Unconsciously, vague purposes of resentment and revenge were beginning to work into his mind, to ripen into performances as soon as occasion should offer opportunity for their due exercise. Either Bostwick did not suspect the feeling he inspired, or was regardless of it. He continued to play the reckless insolent; cool, savage, scornful and satirical in all that he said, as far as it lay within his capacity to be so. And, with all his vulgarity and his educational inferiority, he was still capable of making himself felt. That he should presume at all, was a sufficient cause of offence to M'Kewn, whose social pride was growing in due degree with the acquisition of wealth.

Bostwick, stimulated by a sudden and unusual run of luck, was vexed at being arrested in it. He was acute enough to couple the refusal of Drummond and Barton to play any longer, with the obvious wish of M'Kewn, and he so expressed himself as to make the parties understand that he saw through them all. He knew that Drummond and Barton had money enough for play, and felt sure that, if they had not, and desired it, they could command, with even more facility than himself, the requisite loans from the Scotchman.

"Well," said he, looking round him with a scorn that might be really entertained—"Well, I'm about as poor a dog as ever gnaw'd a bone; but, by Jiminy! I'm not so poor a dog as to let any man say whether I shall bark or not, jest as it pleased him!—No! Ef I'm to hev' a master, I'll choose one that'll let me run or sleep when I wants to, and not rout me up because it suits him only, and set me to barking ag'in, when I've lost all tongue a'ready in a long day's hunt. In some things, I knows I'm worse than a nigger, but bad as I am, I reckon I'll never let any man put his collar round my neck."

"And who does that?" demanded Barton and Drummond in a breath.

"Why, you, both on you. You aint half a man between you. Here I knows you both wants to play, and will take to cards as an old sarpent to a young frog: but, jest because M'Kewn here has given you a look out of his gimblet eyes, you shet up, and put on a righteous face, and swear agin your very souls, that you're tired and don't want to play, and hain't got any more money, and I don't know what other 'scuses. That aint being a man and a gentleman, any way. It's more like being a dog and a slave, I say!"

"Don't you call me a dog and a slave, Bostwick, or I'll hurt you!" growled Barton. Drummond only laughed merrily.

"Hurt will you? Who's afear'd? You're barking up the wrong tree, Barton, if you thinks to scare me with your tongue. I could take the starch out of your jacket any day in three minutes, ef you wants to try."

"Pshaw!" put in M'Kewn, "no more of this! Be still, Barton; and you, Bostwick, don't be a fool! If you're fool enough to play together, and gamble away your money when you ought both to be earning it, at least don't be such fools as to quarrel when your profits can only grow from your working together. You, Barton, set off, and see about the schooner. The tide serves, and she's either up or coming. See to her, and make stowage of what you've got, and that's a matter about which we must talk together, Bostwick. You, Drummond, go with Barton, and see that everything's right."

The two rose without a word. The squatter then—

"Well, ef we're to hev' a talk of it, jest you put out the Jamaica, Drummond, that we shan't hev' a dry time of it. M'Kewn is mighty apt to git thirsty when he talks of business, and I work so hard to listen that it makes my throat mighty dry too. Heave out the liquor, will you?"

"Plenty's the word," answered Drummond, doing as he had been asked. The portly black bottle, square and capacious, was put within reach. The negro woman just then brought in a bucket of water from the spring. She was dismissed, and Drummond and Barton soon disappeared, leaving the squatter and his employer in sole possession of the tent.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

BLOOD MONEY.

SCARCELY had the other parties all disappeared, when M'Kewn began—

"I don't know what to make of your conduct, Bostwick, to-night. It's rather unusual, I must say, and quite different from what, I think I have a right to expect. You have treated me pretty much as if I were one of those ruffians that you have sometimes employed; and seemed to forget, my good fellow, that it is I who am your employer; not you mine!"

"Forgit it, you say! No! by Jiminy! not a bit of forgitting with me in that business," was the reply; "but before I begin, I'll try the Jamaica. It'll take more than you kin find for me, M'Kewn, to make me forgitful of you and your business."

This was said in tones of singular bitterness, and with such a look of scornful superiority as quite confounded the listener.—Meanwhile, the squatter resorted to the bottle, and poured out the Jamaica, and dashed it with water, with as much deliberation, as if there were no other objects before him for consideration. At all events, he showed no regard whatever to the obvious impatience of his companion. At length, having drank, and struck down the cup upon the chest, he turned to M'Kewn, and confronted him.

"And now for it," said he. "You wants to know about the business, and how we got on, and what we've got, and where's the niggers and the papers, eh! Well, now, look you, M'Kewn, ef, before I told you the leetlest word in the world about the matter, I was jest to take this knife, and drive it up to the handle in that rotten heart of your'n, I'd make the right sort of beginning for sich a story as I've got to tell!"

He suited the action, in some degree, to the words; flourishing the blade of his *couteau de chasse*, in singular proximity to the eyes of his auditor. M'Kewn was no imbecile. He was a

cool, firm man; not a hero, perhaps—possessed of none of that sort of bravery which springs tumultuously into appetite and action on the merest show of provocation—but he could fight when need required, and could look calmly the ordinary danger in the face. But the proceeding of the squatter was so entirely unexpected—the fellow had so uniformly shown himself the submissive creature, to be bought and used at pleasure, by the agency of drink or money—and there was now in his face, such an expression of vindictive hate and ferocious frenzy, that, if the Scotchman did not actually quail with terror, he was certainly most terribly confounded.

We do not pretend to say from what sources sprang this new exhibition of conduct, on the part of the squatter, to one who hitherto had been allowed to appear quite as much his master as employer. It may have been the dictate of a cunning policy to inspire the emotion of fear, the better to exercise future control over the person from whom he was otherwise to derive but little future service. The temper of the squatter, who had his pride and vanity also, may have been driven to this degree of desperation by the unconcealed contempt, and the too frequently studied insolence of M'Kewn. The rum he had been drinking might have had something to do with his ebullition;—or, it might be, that the scenes through which he had gone, his own narrow escape, the death of four of his associates, the necessity which he had felt of putting one of them to death with his own hand—these, together, may have combined to work upon his brain, so as utterly to deprive him, for the time, of all the restraints of judgment.

It is very probable that all the reasons above suggested were, in degree, at the bottom of the novel demonstration which he had made; and that policy prompted him (for he had sufficient sagacity to fathom the character of his associates) to employ his natural and mixed emotions with a certain regard to his own future interests. Whatever the source of his speech and conduct, they produced the effect of paralyzing, for a moment, the cold-blooded scoundrel, in whose hands, hitherto, had rested the reins of full authority over the creature who now seemed to threaten him. The picture appeared strangely to realize that German fancy which represents the devil as serving, for a long time, in

perfect submission, the conceited mortal out of whose hands he one day wrenches the staff, only to break with it the head of his astonished master. M'Kewn absolutely gasped. He could not summon words to answer; and the squatter seemed to rise even into dignity, as he certainly did into superiority, as, with a calm and steady eye, he watched scornfully the effect which he had produced upon the meagre, vacant countenance, and the trembling frame of his confederate.

"Yes," said he, "M'Kewn, ef I was jest now to stick my knife into the softest part of your heart, and work it there with a heavy hand, it would be only the right way to begin the telling of my story."

M'Kewn gathered strength to say—but still in gasping accents—

"Why, you wouldn't kill me, Bostwick."

"I don't know but I ought to. 'Twould be a mighty good sarvice done to good people. I ought to, M'Kewn, and ef I was a good man myself, I'd do it soon as eat."

"Why, what have I done, to put you in such a fury?"

"Done! Listen! Of the five men that went with me on this infernal expedition, there's only one now living on this mortal airth!"

"What! Four!" recovering himself—his terror changing into astonishment. "You don't say that four men have been killed?"

"Every man but two on us swallowed his bullet; Bill Sykes, Dick Norris, Rafe Burke and Jeff Brydges. Of all them good fellows, there's not one on 'em, but's a-lying in the woods, and all the ice in nater' couldn't make 'em feel cold. You, and you only, have been the death of them four fellows."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed M'Kewn, in husky and half-choking accents, "that's all nonsense! I had nothing to do with their living or dying. But how was the affair—how did it happen?—What was done?"

"Oh! you're mighty curious to know ef we got the niggers and the papers! You don't mind much ef we was all killed and sculped, so that you had your eends sarved. I know you, M'Kewn, and it's bekase I know how little you care what comes of us, that I feel it in my heart to find my way with this knife into your'n. But I ain't guine to kill you yit; 'kase you see I'm wanting more of your money."

The Scotchman laughed feebly, and with effort.

"You laughs, does you, and I'm telling you of four stout lads all convarted to carrion in your business."

"But that's no fault of mine."

"Whose, then? Wasn't it your business?"

"Yes; but I did not expect—I did not wish—that anybody should be killed on my account."

"Ambushes, when men's got we'pons in their hands, is very likely to hurt people, and prehaps to kill 'em. These fellows are killed, I tell you, four on 'em a-lying stark in the cold night, and looking up, and never once seeing the stairs. And we did our best. There's but one, of all of us six, alive now, beside myself, and the d——l knows how long he's to be allowed to keep in the open daylight. I seed him not four hours ago, only seven miles from here, with a fever on him hot enough to burn his brains to a cinder."

"Who is he?"

"Tony Hines."

"And he has a fever, and but seven miles from here? And what did you do for him?"

"What could I do? It's all in the hands of nater. I'm no doctor; I've got no physic; he must die or live, as it happens."

"We must do something for him. But seven miles. Where does he lie?"

"At old Ephraim Smyzer's, the Dutchman. But we needn't talk of him. Ev you've got any physic to do him good, give it to me, and I'll carry it in the morning. Let's talk of the other matter."

He filled himself another cup of the Jamaica, sipped a little, and, while M'Kewn tried to compose himself, and prepared to listen, the squatter, though with evident dislike of the subject, proceeded to unfold his history, in his own manner.

"We set the trap, and the widow walked fairly into it. The carriage was ahead of the wagon half a mile or more, and Fordham and the young fellow was on horseback. They rid ahead, and when the overseer stopped to water at the branch, with the young fellow on t'other side of him, Bill Sykes lent him the butt-eend of his rifle, and tumbled him into the branch. Onfortunate, Bill Sykes made no account of the lad, seeing he was more a

boy than a man; but the chap's as quick a varmint as ever looked through a green bush, and the moment he seed Fordham down, and the man that down'd him, the little fellow, setting on his horse, let fly at Bill with his pistols, first one shot, then t'other, though the first bullet was enough. Bill hadn't a word to say arter that for any of his friends on airth. Then the young devil wheeled about, and went off like a streak. But a shot from one of our boys tumbled the lad's pony, and we captivated him and tied him down. Fordham tried to git up, and he had two pistols, but we put in, seasonable, and stunted him with another touch of the rifle-butt, and he lay quiet enough while we tied him down. The widow Ebleigh we took out of the carriage, and gave her a hitch too——"

"Did you tie *her?*"

"Yes, 'twas a needcessity, for the s'arch, and the rest of the business. Then we stopt the wagon, and made at the niggers. They scattered, and we caught only seven of them——"

"You got seven, then?" said M'Kewn, feeling a little relieved.

"Got h—ll! We took 'em, but couldn't keep 'em. For, meantime, a nigger gal, name Jinny—I know her well—slipped out somehow from the carriage, and hid in the bushes, and, when we was a-running down the niggers, what does she do, but cuts her missis loose, and cuts Fordham and young Arthur loose, and they gits possession of their own we'pons, and the rifle of Bill Sykes, and takes the woods on us.

"Now, Fordham is a great fellow in the woods, and where they harbored we couldn't say.—At last they got a crack at Dick Norris, and bark'd his limb with a bullet, but not to do much hurt. Then our work was to begin. It's a long story to tell how we snaked and foxed through the bushes, to git upon their rear. At last, Rafe Burke, like a bloody fool, got into a passion, and showed his teeth to the widow, and his fool head to her son, and draw'd his bullet, I reckon from a rest, for it laid him out flat as a sarcumstance. So you see, thar was two fine fellows tumbled by a brat of a boy. But he's a quick chap as ever lived, and ef he grows to be a man, he'll make somebody see sights. But I reckon we'd ha' fixed 'em all at last, for we was marching off the seven niggers, we captivitated under Tony Hines and Jeff Brydges, when, all of a sudden, who should bolt in upon them and us, but that

bloody fat cappin, Porgy, with half-a-dozen dragoons at his heels. They cut down Jeff Brydges in his tracks; they run Tony Hines into the swamps, where, what with cold, and scare, and hunger, he's got the fever; and they tuk Dick Norris in the wagon, and hitched him to a swinging limb, putting a knot in the rope jest under his left ear, that's made him careful never to speak a word sence."

"Good God! is it possible! Did he confess?"

"I reckon he didn't hev' a chance. Dick's a good fellow, and he disapp'inted them. He died too sudden to say much. They gin me a hard chase, so close that I had to throw away my rifle. I've lost rifle, horse, and everything; and four fine fellows shet up for ever; and one prehaps, a-dying now, and the other here, as you sees, before you, purty desperate, M'Kewn and jest as willing to knife himself, and you, and a'most anybody that crooks a finger at him, as to sup this Jamaica."

"What a shocking affair! How your fellows must have bungled!"

"Bungled! By the Etarnal! don't say that agin. A man what pays for his bungling with his life, has a right to hev' the decent thing said about him. It was no bungling, but a clever piece of business, mighty well done; but a man's not able for everything, and who was to know that them d——d hard-riding men of Marion was to come down sudden upon us."

"But you admit that the negro-girl, Jenny, escaped your observation, and it was she, you say, that cut Fordham and the young man loose."

"Yes, 'twas she; but ef it hadn't been for your business, 'twouldn't hev' happened; but you was so set upon heving them bloody papers, that I made for s'arching the carriage arter them my own self. Ef I hadn't done so, but let them go to ——, and jest seen to the captivating of the party, and not trusted to the other fellows, I reckon all would ha' gone right. But 'twas the blasted papers that you talked so much about."

"Did you get them at last—the papers?" demanded M'Kewn, eagerly.

"Yes! 'twas all I got out of the affair."—The squatter thought of the fifty guineas as he spoke but without compunctions of any sort. "Yes! I got 'em; I got all the papers the widow had in

the carriage, a good sized box full, and yours, I reckon, is among 'em. I seed two papers jest like what you show'd me, and tell'd me about."

"Let me see them"—eagerly—"I can tell."

"No! no! M'Kewn! that cock won't fight tell he's well fed. Them papers, ef they're so vallyable to you, are jest as vallyable to me. You've got to pay for them papers afore you git 'em.—They're worth a sight of money. They're worth them four fine fellows that got knock'd in the head to git 'em. They're worth my horse, my rifle, my trouble, my danger, and the *orful* fright, and hurry, and run, and confusion I've had. Them papers must pay for all."

"Well, but Bostwick, I have not refused to reward you for what you have done. I've paid you punctually for all your services."

"Paid me? And whar's the pay? What am I the better for it? It come in driblets and it couldn't last no time. Sich rewardings! 'Twon't do to talk of what you've paid me, M'Kewn; it's now that I'm to show you what you've got to pay. I must hev' one hundred guineas in hand, bright and yallow here"—touching his palms—"before you gits them papers into your'n."

"A hundred guineas! Why man, you're mad. A hundred guineas for a sheet of paper!"

"It's a paper that kin hang you, M'Kewn."

"And you, too, my good fellow."

"I'll be ready for the rope when they're a stringing you. I jest don't care for nothing now except my comforts; and my comforts is to be bought with guineas; and ef the guineas ain't there to buy the comforts, why I don't care how soon the eend of the rope is worked into a slip knot for both our necks. Thar! Them's my principles. Make the most you kin out of them. A hundred guineas is the least I'll take for them bloody papers, I tell you."

M'Kewn changed his tactics.

"But my good fellow, you don't expect me to pay a hundred guineas for the papers without seeing them. What evidence have I that you have really got them?"

"The word of a rascal to a rascal, ef you please, and I ain't guine to give you better evidence; for I kain't. Take that or none at all."

The face of M'Kewn, naturally of a cadaverous cast, flushed instantly to crimson. The space between himself and the squatter had diminished wonderfully in a single week. But he had no remedy. The man who weighs his own life at so small a value, has that of his enemy always at his girdle. He had only to temporize.

"But, as we know each other so well," said M'Kewn, "pray what security shall I have, when I have paid this money, that you will then deliver the papers? How do I know but you will still keep them, and still be calling upon me for more money."

"Well, that sartainly would be a good way to do business. I hadn't thought of that. You're more cute than me, M'Kewn."

"You see for yourself. My only security is in your delivering the papers, at least, when I am prepared to pay the money."

"Kaint be did, M'Kewn, even af I was willing, which I aint. The box of papers is hid away, where all h—ll couldn't find them."

"Ah!"

"Yes! You might take a thousand rigiments and s'arch from Christmas to Christmas, and never once come within nosing distance of their hiding place. It'll take me three days good riding to bring 'em here; and them guineas, one hundred on em, I must hev' before we part to-morrow."

A cloud passed over the brow of M'Kewn. His forehead was contracted. He mused in silence for a moment, then said,—

"Well, I must think of it to-night. One hundred guineas!—I must think of it."

With these words, he abruptly left the tent, while the squatter proceeded to replenish his cup with the convenient Jamaica.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

KNAVES PAIRING OFF.

M'KEWN had suddenly been enlightened by a new idea. He walked out into the woods, taking a *blind* path with which he appeared quite familiar, and which gradually conducted him to the near neighborhood of the river, or rather that arm of the sea which afforded harborage to the brigantines, or transport vessels, to which, he and others, engaged in illicit trade, were about to furnish stolen cargo. But, though approaching this neighborhood, he was not yet disposed to show himself to his confederates. He had to solve his problems, in secret meditation, before he required their cooperation. Exercising our peculiar privilege, we, however, are enabled to report the subject of his thoughts and the conclusions to which they conducted him. As might be expected, his meditations all related to the squatter, Bostwick, and the embarassments which threatened him from that quarter.

"Either," he said to himself, "this fellow has the paper or he has not. Whether he has, or not, his object is to impress me with the fact of his possessing it, and, through my fears, on that subject, to extort money from me. He will never surrender the paper as long as he can do this. He will hold it over me, *in terrorem*, for ever. I must disarm him of this power. I doubt that he has this paper. If he has obtained it, he has secreted it, as he boasts, where I can never lay hands on it without his consent. I know the scoundrel so well, that, supposing he has it, I could swear that it now lies hidden in some hollow tree, in some unfathomable swamp. He will confide the secret to nobody else. What then? If I can keep him from it, it is secure from all other persons. It will moulder and rot in its burial place. It can never rise against me. But, even if he has not this paper, his own evidence may trouble me hereafter. He will still want money—will always be full of wants—so long as he can threaten me

I must get rid of him! I will do it. This very skirmish with Porgy and his followers increases the danger, and makes it doubly important that Bostwick should be out of the way. I see! I have it. Drummond can manage *that!* But, in the meanwhile, I will see this associate of his—this fellow, Hines. It is possible that he has the paper, and only awaits Bostwick's orders on the subject. He is sick with fever—that may be true or not, I must, at all events, find out what I can—all that he knows, and whether he knows more than is becoming for our safety. Eight miles! I can see him and return in four hours. It must be done!"

Having reached this conclusion, he emerged from the thicket, and moved rapidly toward the bluff which usually formed the landing-place for the brigantine. The tide was making rapidly into the creek on which it stood. Three persons were already there, who, on his approach, proved to be Drummond, Barton, and a burly, broad-shouldered, and excessively short person, partly in the habit of a sailor. He was in fact, the master of the brigantine. His name was Forbes. These three were in waiting for the vessel. She was approaching under a fair breeze, cutting directly across the inner bay, having been concealed for several days already, against the opposite shore; her tall rakish masts mingling naturally with the great trees of the forest, which, in that quarter, hung directly over the river. She was guided in her progress by signal lights just over the heads of our party—three lanterns, in a triangle, suspended from a cypress pole. By daylight she was signalled by three separate smokes. M'Kewn joined the group who awaited her, and they spoke together on the subject of their affairs in general. Various matters were discussed among them which need not tax our attention, but scarcely a word was said of the squatter; Forbes only remarked—

"Bostwick, it seems, came empty handed. It's not often that he fails."

"He was probably drunk or he would not have failed this time."

"Is there any chance that he will mend the matter?" was the inquiry of Forbes.

"Scarcely in season for you. You have a pretty fair cargo, however and there's no policy in waiting upon him."

"No, indeed! I shall try to be off by day-peep. We have a hundred and seventy-one. I am prepared to take two hundred, if they were ready; but there's quite too much risk in waiting. Some French vessels of war went by yesterday, going north, and close in shore.—Every day will add to their number, and they are enough now along the route, to keep us watching with all our eyes."

"I want some physic out of your chest, captain," said M'Kewn somewhat suddenly changing the subject.

"What's the matter? You're not going to take physic?"

"It's not for myself."

"We have a good supply. You can have what you please. For my part I don't see the good of it, in our hands at least When a sailor's to die, it makes no sort of difference whether you physic him or not. Die he will, and the physic only keeps him from dying easily."

"It's very different with a backwoodsman. He believes in physic, and relishes large doses. He'll hardly think himself well, unless he has taken physic. The old women, half of them, feed on it, and learn to like it as well as coffee and sugar."

"That's when it's mixed with alcohol," quoth Drummond. But who's it for, M'Kewn?"

"A fellow named Hines, a friend of Bostwick, who has been taken sick some eight miles above, at the cabin of an old man named Shayler. Do you know anything about him?"

"What, old Ephraim? To be sure, I do, and his old wife, too—a pair of turtles that might be owls for the good looks between 'em. But how are you to get the physic there?"

"Carry it myself."

"What! to-night?"

"Yes; as soon as possible. You can direct me as to the road."

"Oh! that's plain enough. It's a short eight miles.—Hardly more than seven, I think; good enough for a man on horseback. I can tell you all about it. But you're getting wondrous charitable of late. Time was, the man might have died and gone to the devil, and you'd never have crossed a creature to carry him physic though you had only a mile to travel. What's in the wind?"

M'Kewn answered by a glance only, but that was sufficiently

significant for all who saw it. They readily comprehended that their confederate was busy in the common cause. It was not necessary to ask or answer questions where the parties were satisfied with each other.

Meanwhile, the rattling of bolt and cordage announced the approach of the vessel. Soon she plunged ahead and shot into the little harborage. A brief delay, and the confederates boarded her; the contents of the medicine chest were overhauled, and M'Kown selected a small supply of such medicines as, in that day, were mostly resorted to in cases of fever. Provided with them, he wasted no time on matters not absolutely essential to the objects of the party. He quickly returned to the land, having first called Drummond aside. He led him into the wood, and at once proceeded to unfold his further designs.

"I do not see that this fellow, Bostwick, can be of any further use to us here, Drummond. On the contrary, he may be troublesome. He promises to be so, as you see. We must get rid of him. He has been a good woodman; he may become a good seaman. Forbes is short-handed, and will have no objection to a sharp, lithe active fellow who will soon learn to run up a rope, as he has run up a tree. You must get him employment in the transport."

"But will Bostwick be willing?"

"By no means! These fellows rarely know what is best for them. We must help him against himself. Give him a good berth whether he wishes it or not. Get him on board to-night, on some pretext, and take him off with you. Invite him to a match at cards. His love of money, and his passion for gaming will make it an easy matter to do this, particularly if he is well fuddled. If, however, you can't persuade him, hoist him on board, and make sail. He will be reconciled to it after a while and when you have given him a taste of your sea pleasures—nightly drinking and gaming. When ashore at Jamaica, leave him there. It is to him a sort of rum and sugar paradise where he may be well content to stay. At all events, there will be no policy in bringing him back. See to it. I shall ride at once to see this fellow, Hines. Try and have it all over before I return. I do not care to see him again. He is already half drunk. Go back to the tent, and resume the cards. Bet as

highly as he may desire. Let him win for awhile. You can recover all your losses on the voyage. Above all, and to effect all, keep him well soaked. The rum will make all easy."

Drummond liked the project. He offered no objections. Without having any motive so grave as that of M'Kewn—without, indeed, having any knowledge of the particular reason which the latter had for getting the squatter out of the way—he yet saw that the proceeding might, in some degree, contribute to the common cause. Besides, Drummond had a passion for fun, and the abduction of the squatter promised ample store for merriment.

"It will be comical," said he, "when the fellow wakes, and finds himself out of sight of land. Won't he look wild?"

The plan being properly understood, the parties separated, M'Kewn at once taking horse, without showing himself at the tent, and speeding, with all possible haste, toward the cabin of old Ephraim Snyzer. Two hours as he had calculated, brought him to the place. The family had retired for the night; but M'Kewn's business was urgent and he prepared to rout them up. His entrance into the enclosure brought upon him the fierce assault of a couple of hounds, the attentions of which made him rather slow to dismount; but he kept them off with his whip, and made his way to the steps of the house, which consisted of three huge pine blocks leading to a low piazza, into which, as there was no railing around it, he alighted directly from the saddle. Fastening his horse to one of the columns, he thundered at the door, keeping close watch upon the dogs which had ascended the piazza also, but hung about the steps, seeming in some degree, to respect the house, if not the intruder. But they did not spare their tongues if they did their teeth. Their clamors were incessant, and between their music, and the tune kept upon the door by M'Kewn's stick, the inmates of the hovel were soon aroused.

"Who's that?" was the demand, in a female voice.

"It's the doctor," answered M'Kewn promptly. His cue had been adopted long before, by which he included himself among the faculty. "You've got a sick man here, haven't you?"

"Yes; I reckon; and I'm sick myself," answered the old woman, opening the door, and displaying herself in her night dress

—a very short one—with a ragged blanket over her shoulders, and a blazing torch of lightwood in her hand.

"Won't you come in, doctor," she said. "I'm mighty glad to see you. The poor man's got the fever yit, and a mighty hot fever it is."

"Where is he?" was the eager inquiry which M'Kewn made, pushing in as he spoke.

"Well, now, jest set down a bit, doctor, while I light the fire;" and the good woman squatted down to the occupation on the hearth. A grunt from the bed in one corner, drew M'Kewn's attention to that quarter.

"Is it Doctor Ferney?" asked old Ephraim.

"No; I'm Doctor Warley."

"Yis! I hearn of you,—somewhar' about Dorchester, I'm a thinking. Well, doctor, I'm mighty glad you're come to do something for the poor man what's sick here; and something for all on us. I'm sick myself with an awful bad turn of rheumatiz—one whole side of me is a'most useless, doctor; I kain't well straighten myself these times. Kain't you give me something to do me good?"

The fire by this time was kindled, and the old woman interposed with her complaints which were chronic also, like those of her husband. We spare her narration. M'Kewn was not unprepared for any emergency. He knew the people, their usual ailments, and the faith which they had in professional art. But he was too anxious about the patient he had come to see, to suffer any delays of the interview.

"Well," said he, "as this poor fellow has a hot fever, his case is the most pressing. We'll see what his condition is first, and then attend to yours."

He was conducted accordingly to the shed-room where Hines lay. The patient was awake, and welcomed the supposed physician with profound satisfaction. Dr. Warley—as he called himself—sat down upon the pallet by the sick man, and grasped his wrist with a professional promptness that would have done honor to the regular faculty—then shook his head slowly with a very deliberative nod. Mrs. Smyzer was disposed to linger and to mingle in the conference; but this by no means suited our medico.

"Leave us, my good woman! The secrets of the sick are to

be respected. I will see to your ailments, and those of your old man, when I have got through with the case of Mr. Hines."

The good woman retired.

"You knows me, then?" quoth Hines.

"To be sure! Bostwick is an old patient of mine. He's done many a pretty turn for me, and I've saved him many a time when he was on his back. He begged me to ride here to-night. I'd have done it for no other man. But, in truth, I know all about his affairs and yours. He counsels with me about other things than physic."

"Oh! ho!" said Hines,—and he straight began to suspect that his worthy physician had been the employer of the party on its late expedition—a secret which Bostwick had studiously kept to himself. The next thought with the sick outlaw, was to ascertain what had been the reward which had tempted the squatter. His cupidity taught him to suspect that Bostwick had monopolized the lion's share, as is too common in all such cases.

"I'll pump him about it," was the almost spoken resolve of Tony. The two parties, it will thus be seen, had each a covert object to be gained, in each case demanding some exercise of ingenuity. As the very being a rogue always implies some degree of ingenuity, it is needless for us to say that the hopeful pair were quite equal to the objects entertained. We shall be compelled, however, to omit many of the details, and much of the dialogue between them, and report results rather than the process by which they were reached. It was M'Kewn's object to appear quite familiar with the squatter's affairs. It was the policy of Tony to show the doctor that he had a sufficient inkling of the relations existing between the parties.

"You have a very hot fever, Tony; but you owe it as much as anything else, to the scenes through which you have gone.—You've had a hard time of it. But Bostwick don't spare his mind I warned him to be careful of what he was about."

"He didn't mind you much, doctor. Bost is too quick a feetle. He don't look about him enough. But you paid him too well, doctor, that was it! He was so keen for his pay, and he didn't watch both ends of the road close enough."

"I paid him!—oh! yes! as you say, he was too quick for his pay to do his work properly. And that's the reason of all the

misfortune. He bungled badly, and lost all he came for. But he got the box and papers, eh?"

"Box and papers!"

"Yes; didn't he? He made sure of that? Of course, you know."

"Know? I reckon I did. But about the box and papers——"

"He got them from the carriage!"

"He did?"

"He says so; of course he did! Didn't you help search the carriage?"

"No! dern his liver, I didn't! That was what he was arter then! We helped knock down the driver, and tie the fellows and the woman, but 'twas him that s'arched the carriage."

"Well, didn't you know what he found there—the box, the money, and the papers?"

"Box of money! No, there was no money. I axed him, and Morris axed him, but he swore there wasn't no money."

"Oh! you surely forget. Bostwick's an honest fellow. He wouldn't cheat me—wouldn't tell me a lie, I'm sure. He found the box, I'm sure."

"Honest, you say! Well, I reckon he is, and I reckon every man's honest tell he's found out. Ef there was a box I never seed it, and ef he got any money out of the carriage, then he told us all a-most eternal lie, for he swor he couldn't find nothing."

"All was in the box. You saw *that*!"

"No, I didn't."

"Is it possible? Why how could he have hidden it? You all helped to stop the carriage, to tie the women and the men, and you must have seen."

"Yes; we did help, but you see, the dern'd fox of a fellow—now I see it all—he s'arched the carriage first, by his one self, and kept us at a distance to see after the men gone ahead and the wagon behind, so that he had all the chances."

"But, if he got it, how could he hide it from you, so that you shouldn't see even the box?"

"Easy enough! He kept us all busy, and he kept pretty much with the woman. Ef anybody seed the box and money besides himself, 'twas Rafe Burke, and he's not able to say anything about it now. Bostwick swore he found nothing."

"Oh! he didn't think of the box at the time. But I'm sure he got it. He says so now. He's hid it somewhere, he says——"

"In the swamp! He had chance enough for it, for we divided, you see, one sot agin the carriage, one agin the overseer and boy, and another agin the wagon. He kept the carriage and the woman to himself, and was a long time about 'em. But he swore there was no money."

"But did you believe the story? Did you suppose that the widow, who is so rich, would go to the country and take no money with her—even if it were only a stocking full of shillings for chicken money. I shouldn't wonder if she had a hundred guineas in that box!"

"A hundred guineas! The eternal cheat! And you paid him so well, too."

"I!—oh! we wont say what hand I had in the matter, seeing that it's turned out nothing. The box might be worth something now, if we had it."

"Dern the box, I say; and dern that fox of a fellow that kept his mouth shet all the while about the box. Now, look you, I kin jest show the chance he had for gutting the carriage and hiding a dozen boxes"—and he proceeded to give such a full account of the whole adventure, as served to confirm the story, told by Bostwick, and to satisfy M'Kewn that the squatter, in all probability, had secured the papers. The sick ruffian aroused himself at the squatter's appropriation of the spoil, allowed himself no reserve, and went into particulars which supplied many gaps in the narrative as given by the latter. M'Kewn listened coolly, egging the fellow on by a word thrown in, now and then, at the right moment. He now recalled certain studious efforts of Bostwick to send all his confederates out of sight, and, in fact, accounted for the failure to secure the negro-girl, by the solicitude of the squatter to put the mysterious box out of sight.

"Well, I'm sorry I told you of the box and the hundred guineas; but I really supposed you all knew what was done. Bostwick didn't speak of it as any secret, and I reckon he'll give you your share of the money. He only forgot."

"Forgot! D——n him! He forgot a purpose! Now, of all the money you gin him in this business——"

"Who? I!—oh! no! I suppose somebody employed him and paid him well, but I am only his friend when he's in trouble."

"Hem! oh! yes! I understand! It's only right not to say too much. But I reckon he got famous pay beforehand."

"Very likely. Hundreds, no doubt!"

"What! guineas!"

"To be sure—guineas. To do such a business as you went on must have called for a round pocket full. Bostwick is not the man to look at such work for less than a hundred for himself."

"End you gin him? You think he got so much as that?"

"Not a shilling less!"

"The 'tarnal rascal! Look you, doctor, give me the physic and let me get out of this fodder. I longs to jest call the dern'd fellow out into the bushes, and ax him for a showing of his pockets."

"Oh! you mustn't quarrel. I'm sorry I told you. He'll make it all right, I'm sure."

"Jest you make me well, doctor. I longs to be at him. I'll go into him with a mighty sharp tooth."

The "doctor" again felt the pulse of the patient, now somewhat heightened, and proceeded to prescribe for him. An enormous dose of Glauber's salts was poured into a tumbler, and the old woman was called on for Virginia snake-root. Of this root the country is everywhere full, and all the peasantry is well acquainted with it. A grain of tartar was deposited among the salts.

"It will disquiet him to some purpose," quoth McKown, to himself, as he mixed the medicines, "and that is all, perhaps, that physic ought to be expected to do."

There were other words between himself and patient, and when he left him, he bestowed a reasonable time upon the old couple, for whose ailments he left other medicines, possibly as wisely chosen, with reference to the intended object, as the salts, tartar and snake-root. This done, our *soi-disant* doctor did not unnecessarily delay his departure. As he rode away, on his return, he stated his own conclusion to himself, thus—

"He has got box and papers! But this fellow knows nothing of them, and he is the only other survivor. Bostwick has hidden them from his confederates, which is pretty much like hi-

ding them from all the world. What more do I want? If he hides them from all others, I am quite as well satisfied that he should hide them from me. Let them rot in their hiding-place, and let him rot in Jamaica or——in a better region! He shall trouble me no more!"

CHAPTER XL.

THE HAZARDS OF THE DIE.

While M'Kewn was playing the physician, his confederates, Drummond and Barton, had made their way back to the tent where the squatter had been left, prepared to put in practice the policy which the first-mentioned person had suggested. They found Bostwick stretched at length upon the ground, with his head and shoulders resting against the chest, the cup of Jamaica and bottle by his side, and a pipe in his mouth, from which an occasional puff only, betrayed the half-drowsy state of the smoker. He roused himself up as they came in, but it was evident, from his flushed face and the wildness of his eyes, that he had been exceedingly frequent in his potations, and was now, as Drummond phrased it, in a whisper to his associate, "rather the worse for wear." This was a condition that promised them much facility in performing the duty confided to their hands. That Bostwick suffered from the effects of the liquor was not, however, favorable to his amiableness and sweetness of temper. His natural sullenness had become savageness, and he abruptly asked—

"Where's M'Kewn?"

"He's about somewhere. He'll be in directly."

"Well, he'd better. I kain't wait too long. I wants money!"

"Why, you've *got* money, man! Where's all that you won from us, and what you had before?"

"That!" said he, thrusting his hands into his pockets, and drawing forth and displaying the contents—"What's that! I tell you I wants a hundred guineas from M'Kewn—not a guinea less—and I must hev it!"

"A hundred guineas!" exclaimed Barton in unaffected astonishment. "Why, what the devil does he owe you a hundred guineas for?"

"What! But that's my business! He owes me a great deal more, ef the right was known, and I'll make him know it afore I'm done with him. He's too mean a rascal, by thunder, to be a white man!"

Look you, Bostwick, that's not the way to speak of a person *t's* finding you the grub you eat!" said Barton. Drummond edged his companion, and in a whisper said—

"Don't answer the drunken fool, or answer him according to the folly and the liquor."

"Grub! Find me! And who the h—ll tells you that I owes sich a fellow as M'Kewn any thanks for anything. It's he owes me; and he shall pay me, too, or sweat for it. I say he's as dirty a dog as ever run without a nose; and ef you don't like what I say, jest try your hand to make the speak more agreeable; and see what'll come of that. I'm a man every day for my inches against the inches of any other man!"

"Pshaw! what are you both mouthing about? You're both of you drunk, I reckon, or so near on the road to staggers that you'll never reach it together. Shut up both of you, and let's have a drink all round. I'm as thirsty after work as a bull-frog after a dry-shower. Come, Bostwick, my boy, you don't mean to soak up all the Jamaica in your own sponge."

"Thar it is;—I'm not unreasonable with any man, and will join you, of drinking's the word and no offence meant. But that don't make me unsay what I've said of M'Kewn. He's as mean as gar-broth, and a rascal to boot!"

"Well, that's just as you and he please. We shan't fight for either of you. You're both of you able to do your own fighting I reckon."

"He fight!" quoth the squatter. "Never! unless with you wi'pon or mine. He'll use our fingers for the shinemage always, yet always forgit to pile our hands when its done. I say he owes me *more* than a hundred guineas, ef I'm to git my rights; and I'd like to see the white man that says 'lie' to me!"

This was said rising, and with a fierce look at Barton. Drummond again nudged his companion, in order to check his bulli-

tion of defiance which he might be disposed to offer; a necessary precaution, as Barton was one of that irritable race who too frequently smelt the fire, when there was really nothing to be found but smoke.

"Psho!" interposed the peace-maker, Drummond. "Why the devil do you talk of fight, when I talk of drink. None but a fool fights so long as the liquor lasts. Here, hand up the bottle, Bost, if you're sober enough for it, and empty your cup. I go for a full swallow all round, fresh from the fountain. Come, Barton, smooth off your rough-dry visage, and suck. You shall drink first, if not too bashful; and if you are that, leave it to me to show you how the thing may be done. Quick with the cup, Bostwick, there's no time to be lost. I want to get at the pictures. I want to win back some of my money."

"Or put a leetle more into the heap," answered the squatter, as he carried the cup to his lips, and emptied it.

"Now fill," quoth Drummond.

"After you first."

"Well, there's no use taking up precious time making faces; here, boys, is good luck to all good fellows. The world's made up of two sorts of people—those who live for other people, and those who live by other people. I'm one of the last, but I don't complain or quarrel with the first, seeing that we can't exactly do without 'em. I'm for live and let live."

"That's what I'm a thinking. It's only jest right and nateral," responded the squatter, warmly. "I aint, anyhow, an onreasonable man. You first, Mr. Barton," he continued with amiable tone, but with something ceremonious in his manner.

"Drink yourself," said Barton, "I aint in a hurry."

"And I aint in no hurry neither," answered the squatter. "I aint such a dog when I'm a-tharsting, that I must jump right into the pond."

This was said doggedly. He had not been sufficiently reconciled to the other, not to misconstrue everything that he said. Barton saw his error.

"Oh! I didn't mean that, Bostwick; so don't be wolfish. I'll drink and have done with it; so, fill up for me, Drummond Your health, men, and good profits always to good fellowship."

"And righteous pay when the work is done," added Bostwick.

"Amen!" quoth Drummond. "That's good doctrine! And now, boys, as we've got no more to do to-night much, any of us, shall we turn up the pictures. I'm ready to face you with the goldfinches, Bostwick. I got a small supply from Forbes."

"Forbes! who's he?"

"The captain of the schooner, and a fellow you're born to like."

"I doesn't know him."

"But you will. And that reminds me. What say you to going aboard? We can play there better than here, and there's one more man with money in his pockets."

"Who—the captain?"

"Yes; to be sure—Forbes; a fine fellow as ever tripped an anchor, and, I reckon, with guineas enough to buy and sell us all. He hasn't been sailing between Charlestown and Jamaica these five years not to have crammed more than one sea-chest to bursting."

"Let him come here," said Bostwick.

"He can't! Can't leave the vessel. But he'll be infernal glad to see us aboard, and will give us the best of liquors, a good table, good lights, and a supper after it,—all much better than we can get here. What say you?"

"I'm willing," answered Barton.

"I ain't," was the reply of the squatter. "I don't like the smell of the sea and the smell of the ship. It always hurts me, and makes me feel oneasy. Give me the feel of the solid airth under my foot. It's a sort of tempting of Providence to try to ride or walk on a shifting thing like the water. The Jamaica is good enough for me, jest here, and I've found it a good thing without any water at all."

Barton would have argued the case with the squatter, but Drummond, the better politician, yielded the point at the proper moment, and before the victim should have suspected the hook concealed in the untaken bait. He made a merit of necessity, and declared himself quite satisfied with any arrangement, particularly if it called for no delay.

"We are enough for fun," said he, "and have gold enough for a smart fight till the small hours. Whether I lose or win, I shall sleep sound enough when the time comes for it. Square yourself round, Barton, and haul up your legs. Best, throw a few light-

wood knots into the fire. Let's see what we're doing. And now put up your pennies. How do we begin — small or large — white or yellow?"

"When I've once had the feeling of the yellow, I don't like to touch the white," quoth Bostwick, "but we'll begin small, ef it pleases you." And he put up a single guinea. The others did the same. The cut was made for the deal, which fell to Barton, and the hands were dealt round.

"Let's liquor before we begin," cried Drummond, laying down his cards.

"I'm agreeable," said Bostwick, reaching round for the cup and bottle. Again they drank; the sly Drummond barely dashing the water with the rum, and Barton imitating his forbearance. The squatter always drank in good faith; his own tastes never allowing him to suppose that his associates, in order to circumvent another, would ever deny themselves. He was further deceived by Drummond's eloquent declarations in favor of good liquor. It was his frequent topic, and he even volunteered a dithyrambic, of rude fashion — probably his own — the burden of which gave a most glowing picture of the glory of the bacchanalian, and a most melancholy one of the sorrows of temperance, — which was fiercely chorussed —

"'Tis the milk-sop that withers in autumn,
And shakes, in the winter, with chill,
Not he who dives down in the bottle,
And grows warm by the fire of the still!"

"A mighty good song that, Drummond; ef I could sing, I'd larn it. 'Twould be good to sing when a fellow had no liquor, 'Twould almost warm him of itself; jest as one feels warm if he only smells at the empty jug where the Jamaica has been kept. Spade's trump, — and there's a lead for you."

The devil! The ace!" cried Barton, throwing down the ten of the same suit.

"Heh! I had you then!" cried the squatter, with a chuckle. "I wonder ef there's no more parties in danger, standing without any company. I'll fish for 'em."

And the ace was followed by the king.

"Dickins! why, you're a witch, Best!" was the cry of Drummond, as he yielded his knave to the lead.

"It's luck only—it's time I had some, I'm a-thinking. Count up. I've one to go."

In a few minutes more the squatter gathered up the stakes.

"We'll double!" said Barton, pushing up two guineas.

"Ditto!" quoth Drummond, doing likewise.

"I'm agreeable to anything when the luck's with me," was the response of the squatter, and the game was resumed with new interest. Other games followed, and the fortunes of the squatter were rising.

"Let's liquor, boys. It may change the luck," was again the proposition of Drummond, carried *nem. dis.*, and the parties drank.

"I wonder where M'Kewn is?—d—n his splinters!" cried Bostwick, as Barton now gathered up the stakes.

"Be here directly. He's at the vessel, I reckon. If you're tired, we'll go there."

"Tired! I'd like to see the man what could tire me out at this business. Push on, Barton. We're a-waiting."

"It'll come soon enough, Bostwick, for you; for I reckon luck's changing, and I mean to root you out to-night."

"Kaint be did, by any man of your timbers, I'm a-thinking. What's that?"

"A diamond."

"Throw on more lightwood—there's no seeing what one's got."

"That's only because you've got so little, I suppose. What do you do?"

"Stand, by jingo! Play to that!" flinging down a card.

"So I will, and one you wont be liking much."

"The devil! You hed the ace!"

"Yes; and the deuce too!"

"Jimini! that's what I call mighty bad fortin. I stood on king and tray."

"Cut on both ends, high and low; and look at that and that!" flinging down knave and ten.

"Criki—Lord! what an eternal hand!"

"Scared, Bost?"

"Skear'd, never!—see by that, if I'm skear'd!" And he now thrust up five guineas, and demanded that they should be covered.

"You're sworn to make a short night of it, Bost!" said Drummond. "At that rate, the time of some of us will be short, too!"

"Out loose!" cried the squatter—"I'm the old sarpent now. I'll wind you up."

"I must have another sup of Jamaica, boys, to give me heart to begin," said Drummond. "There's too much to lose, on an empty stomach. Who says for a sup?"

"I'm consenting!" was the pliant answer of Bostwick. "But where the d—l is M'Kewn?"

"He's aboard! He'll be here directly. And now, boys—the bold better, the honest winner, and to him who can keep what he gits."

"It's a wise man to be all three, I'm a-thinking, but I drinks it with a whoop! Whoop! whoop! hurrah! for the first horse and the best shot! Whoop! whoop! hurrah! and the devil take M'Kewn!"

"Amen!" quoth Drummond, echoing the pious adjuration—then, in a whisper to Barton—"The snake's bitten him fairly. It's time that we should win, *now*. When his gold's all gone he'll probably be willing to go top."

"Whoop, old fellows, and at your p'inters! I'm the old sarpent, I tell you, and am going into you with a horn. Whar's the gould! oh! thar! It's fifteen guineas I'm to take up."

"If you can."

"Ef I kin! Ef be hang'd! I'm the man to take 'ef' by the collar, and make him work in my harness. 'Ef's' no master of mine, and never was! I kin send him to the right about with a whoop! whoop! whoop! hurrah! and into the shiners!"

The cards were to be dealt by the squatter; but he had so many ejaculations to make, and a pause accompanying each, that the process was a slow one.

"Three to you, Drummond!—whoop, old fellow, I likes you."

"And, thus speaking, he threw the arm, with the card hand, about the neck of the preferred companions, and drew him lovingly over into his lap.

"I always thought you a good fellow, Bostwick, of a most tender heart."

"And who says I ain't? I'm as tender as a gal child. Oh! of you could only see my Dory."

"Your what!" asked Drummond.

"I didn't say '*what!*' I said Dory! Dory's my oldest gal child, and a beauty of the forest, and nobody shall say anything onrespec'ful about her."

"To be sure not. She is a beauty."

"I know'd you'd say so. You're a man of sense and a gentleman, Drummond. You shall see Dory some of these days. She's a gal child to please a gentleman. Well!—but why don't you play?"

"Deal out the cards, then," said Barton, who was yearning to restore some of his lost gold to his pocket.

"Deal!—well, I swow! but I hev' the pictars in my own hand. That's strange. How's that!"

"Why, to be sure—you're dealing, and you've given me three. Go on to Barton."

"Three to you, Barton, and three to me."

The deal was finished after some further maudlin delay. Bostwick picked up his cards, and the habit of play contended successfully for awhile with his drunkenness. He absolutely won the game. Barton became captious, and was kept in check only by the vigilance of Drummond. The latter, finding that the squatter was still able to play his cards with habitual skill, proposed another draught of Jamaica; but Bostwick had undergone a new phase of drunkenness and feeling. He refused doggedly. The maudlin had given place to the sullen.

"No! I'm blister'd ef I do! I'll not drink agin jest now. Drink yerself, ef you likes it. I don't. It don't do me no good. I'm a-thinking of my children. Jest now, I talked of Dory, and you didn't know what I meant. And when I wanted to deal, I forgot all about it. That makes me know I've had jest enough for a sober man. Jamaica ain't a sensible liquor ef you takes too much of it. I've had my share for this drinking."

"You're right!" quoth Drummond. "I proposed as a matter of course, seeing I wanted a drink myself, but it's true, Bost, I thought you had a dose large enough for your business half an hour ago."

"You don't mean to say I'm drunk!"

"No! not exactly drunk, but a little in the fog, that's all!"

"In the fog! It's a sign of fog is it, when I've been doing all the winning."

"Pshe!" said Barton. "That's all luck—luck don't ask if a man's drunk or sober when she turns on his side."

"You think so! It's luck! well, we'll try luck a leetle more. You don't mind fattening the sheep?"

"How much?"

"Oh! it don't matter; put down your gould, as much as you wants to see kivered. That's all I ax!"

The pile was soon raised. The cards dealt; the game played and the prize won. Drummond was the successful gamester. His success continued until the last guinea of the squatter was put up. It was lost also. Bostwick was once more reduced to his shillings, and pretty well sobered by the reverse of fortune. The shillings, in turn, became the prize of his opponents, and, starting to his feet, he seized the bottle, and swallowed a fearful draught of the fiery liquor.

"Where is that bloody satan, M'Kown?"

"Can you get more gold from him, think you?" demanded Drummond, with a pleasant sneer upon his countenance.

"Kin I?" he answered. "Ef I let him off with less than a hundred guineas, may I never taste a drop agin."

"Let us seek him at the vessel. I have no doubt we shall find him there. I'll go with you as long as there is any hope of the guineas."

"Come then! Blast his liver, he's a-dodging me. But he don't know me yit. I'll feel the bottom of his pockets, or the bottom of his heart, this time, ef he's got any."

"Another draught before we start!" cried Drummond, rising to his feet. The others joined him in his potations. Then they all proceeded to the river bank, against which, almost touching it, lay the vessel.

"You'll go with us on board?"

"No! You go, Drummond, and bring him out. I'll wait for you here."

Barton would have tried to persuade him, but Drummond again interposed.

"No," said he, "there's no use. If he gets more money, he'll only want to go back to the tent to play."

And the two went on board the vessel, which lay quiet, rocking with the tide, nobody visible on her decks, and everything silent around. They soon disappeared from the sight of the squatter, who threw himself down on the grass to await their return with M'Kewn. While he lay there, half stupid, yet full of secret rages, three men left the brigantine and approached him. He noted their appearance, and concluded them to be the two persons who had just left him, returning with M'Kewn. They had reached him, when he discovered that they were strangers and all sailors.

"Where's M'Kewn," said he, rising to his feet.

"In the cabin," was the reply of one of them, "and the captain's spinning a long yarn. He says you must come to him."

"I'll see him d—d first. Tell him to come to me."

"Oh! that's all gammon, my hearty. You must go to him."

With these words the spokesman laid a hand on Bostwick's shoulder, lightly and without any show of violence; but a something in the tone and manner of the fellow seemed to alarm the squatter; he pushed him off, recoiled, and clapped his hand to his side for his knife. It was gone. He was disarmed. Not a moment was allowed for parley. He was at once grappled by all the three, lifted off his legs in a moment, and, struggling all the while, was carried on board the vessel. Suddenly, he was let down into the dark but open hold, and slid down and away, as he thought, into the bottomless depths of the sea. But he soon encountered a solid object. He rolled over a pile of rice barrels; and grasped at them with the hold of one in mortal dread of sinking. The stars, for a single instant, were visible overhead. But a single instant. The opening was then darkened by the figures of his captors. He strove to rise and shrieked to them in question, appeals and curses; but, with rude laughter, they clapped down the hatches, and left him in unmitigated darkness.

The hours went by wearily, and, in utter exhaustion, the captive slept. When he awakened, he almost swooned with the sickness which he felt. The billows were rocking beneath him. He was already out at sea. When suffered to appear on deck, the land was a mere riband along the verge of the ocean. He was flying, perforce, from his familiar swamps and fastnesses, his woman and her children.

"Oh! Dory! Dory!" he cried, as this conviction forced itself upon him. "I'm aguine from you, the Lord only knows whar', and maybe won't never see you no more!"

"One danger disposed of," said M'Kewn, to himself, as he left the cabin—for he had been there at the moment when the squatter was brought on board—"and if Forbes and Drummond can take a hint, the impudent scoundrel will give his secrets to the sea rather than the air. His mouth is stopped for ever!"

Not so fast, M'Kewn. The sea has been known to give up its secrets as well as its dead. We shall see in due time what is to come of all this!

CHAPTER XLI.

PORGY'S NOTIONS OF THE USEFUL.

As we have no particular motive, just now at least, for following the fortunes of the squatter upon the seas, let us return to the dry land, and, with all speed, to the ruined homestead of Glen-Eberley. We left Captain Porgy and his two companions, Millhouse and Fordham, about to console themselves with supper, after the fatigues of the fruitless search after Bostwick. Lance Frampton had gone to see his sweetheart, and the party of three proved quite adequate to the supper in his absence. Tom, the cook, had recovered his good humor; Pomp, the waiter, after a frequent lessoning from the flat broad hands of his senior, had improved in knowledge of his duties, and activity in their performance; and the evening repast had been enjoyed with an equal degree of satisfaction by all parties. Fordham did not long remain after supper, but took his leave while Porgy and Millhouse were lighting pipes. While he remained, however, he was an amused listener to the guardian councils of the latter whose self-esteem found grateful exercise in suffering the guest to see how strictly he held the reins of authority in his grasp, and with what judgment he could rebuke the want of it in his superior. He had employed himself in twitting the captain with

all the thoughtless, profligate and expensive performances of which he had been guilty, and not only throughout his campaigns, but, as far as he had acquired a knowledge of them, during all his life previous. The subject had been brought up by a repeated allusion to the guinea bestowed upon the squatter's child.

"It's the weakness of the cappin, Mr. Fordham," quoth he—"his very worst infarmity. I'm a most thinking its the only one he's got—but it's a mighty bad one for a man that wants everything on his plantation for the working of a crop. Sich a man has no right to be ginerous. It's a sort of cutting off one's own life to lengthen other people's. Now, all through the war 'twas jest the same thing. He'd be a giving, whenever he had it, and to all sorts of people. And he was always a giving to them persons from whom there was no sort of reason to ixpect to git anything back again. Now, you know, there's no sort of charity in doing for people who kain't do nothing for you. The proper sense of charity is always to git back for it a leetle more and a leetle better than you give. But Cappin Porgy could never, so far as I see, git the right sense of charity and ginerosity. He was always a wasting himself on people who hadn't nothing, and warn't in the way to git anything. Ef there was a poor camp woman that had lost her man in a skrimmage, the cappin was the first to empty his pockets into her lap. I've seed him do it a dozen times. Now, that was all great foolishness. Ef he had given her a matter of three or four English shillings, or we'll say five or ten or twenty pounds continental currency, after it had got so plentiful that one might work with a pack of it, and not airn his potatoes after all—why there mout have been a justifying of his doings; but to fling the guineas away, the raal grit, all yellow jackets, three, five, ten—jest as many as he had—when the shillings would have done as well—that was the sin and the foolishness of the business. And the cappin has been very foolish and a great sinner in that way. Then he'd waste himself on the sort of company he kept. Now, cappin, what did you ever see in that blasted longshanks, Oakenberg—that called himself a doctor—a fellow that sickened and killed more good fellows with his yarbs and poultices than he'll ever meet in heaven—what did you see in that skunk of a fellow to make you do for him what you did? Why, Mr. Fordham,

would you believe it, the cappin let that fellow who was next door neighbor to a born ediot, set at his mess and feed daily, when Oakenberg couldn't neither bring in food nor game; couldn't work nor fight; was the skeariest chap you ever seed, and could only talk conceited about snakes, and how to be safe in fighting in the army. That fellow lived on the cappin, and though the cappin dispised the fellow, and poked all sorts of fun at him, yet he gin him money, and clothes, and food, when he wanted them all for himself. At a famous scrimmage we had here with Fraser at Parker's Ferry, the cappin mounted a British officer, and told him to deliver, and wanted to make him prisoner, but the red coat was either mighty drunk or mighty ussy, and when there was no sense in it, for he couldn't get off, he run his horse close agin the cappin's, and flashed his pistol in his face. Ef the dirty leetle we'pon hadn't a-missed fire I reckon he'd ha' killed him. Well, the cappin fired up furious, and cut down the poor fellow at a jerk — cut him clean through his skull to his chin. Tom run in — Tom 'members all — don't you, Tom?"

"To be sure I 'member," quoth Tom, "wha' for hinder? Mauss-sa owe me for dat ossifer coat, and breeches, and boots, he gee way ta de doctor, to dis day."

"That's it!" exclaimed Millhouse. "That's it! Tom run in, stripped the officer, coat, breeches, boots and all, and generously offered 'em to his master, the cappin there, after all the fighting was over. What do you think? Jest at that moment he seen Dr. Oakenberg, with his long shanks and high shoulders pretty nigh naked, and he kicks the whole pile over to Oakenberg."

"Das' true, mass Millh'us! Jes' I see dat, I make a grab at de close; — de doctor hab no right for tak 'em; — and mauss tu'n round short and kick me over. Mauss promise for pay me guines for em, but I nebber see de shine of dat guinea race to dis day."

"It's all true, Mr. Fordham, as Tom tells you; he kills the red coat with his own hands, — and when Tom strips him he gives his rigimentals, — first rate broadcloth coat, hat, boots and breeches to the meanest and most undeserving skunk in the whole army."

"Oh! Millhouse," quoth Porgy, "had you seen the wistful eyes of poor Oakenberg, as he saw the breeches, and looked down at his own bare legs ——".

"D—n his bare legs! He had the meanest looking legs in the army ——"

"The very reason why they should be covered out of sight," quoth Porgy.

"But not at your cost and ixpense!"

"Why, Millhouse, listen to Tom, and he will tell you that it was at *his* cost and expense. There was the double beauty of my procedure; I not only clothed the naked, but compelled that selfish scoundrel, Tom, to become charitable."

"Psho! don't I know that you'll pay Tom yit! Don't I know, and don't he know, that he'll git more than he bargained for ——"

"What! more kicks than coppers?"

"No! more goulden guineas than you promised. The truth is, cappit, that you're never so foolish as when you've got money. You don't know any decent way to git rid of it. There, you was always for having that fellow, Dennison, about you, eating the 'lowance of other men, and drinking more than his share of the Jamaky always — and for what? What could he do? He warn't a reasonable, useful man. He couldn't cook a steak, or bake a loaf, or, sew his own breeches, or do nothing. He could only joke, sing, and tell vedickilous stories, and make them foolish pe'tries — tink-it-a-tank, tink-it-a-tank — one word knocking agin another at the end of the line, as I may say, agin natur, — for where do you hear decent, sensible people talking with a bell ringing in their ears all the time? That fellow couldn't keep anything — money, clothes, hat, shoes, — everything went, somehow, and yit the fellow was such a blasted fool that he never seemed to care about it at all, and would jist keep on, laughing and singing, and making his tink-it-a-tanks, and think-it-a-thanks, with a sart of looseness that was vexatious."

"Come! come! Millhouse! you must not be running down my poet. Dennison is a great fellow and has frequently saved me from suicide. More than once, when we were starving in the swamps, I should have cut my throat, or yours, Millhouse, but for the consolation which Dennison brought me in his verses and songs; and Oakenberg, though as you say, a great fool, was yet a fool with a relish. He had the virtue of making himself laughed at, and that afforded relief to sensible people. He had his uses, and you must think better of him. I shouldn't be at all surprised

to see both Dennison and Oakenberg here before long. I asked them both to come and see me."

"The d—l you did! You don't say, cappin."

"Ay, but I do! you may look for them both some of these days."

The sergeant threw up hands and eyes in horror.

"Thar it is! The old way! Thar is no end to the flinging away of some men's guineas. Why, Lord bless you, cappin, of once they git here, you'll never git shet of them. They're people to stick like a pitch plaster, and to draw like a mustard."

"Well, they must stick then! Poor devils, they must stick somewhere. The world owes them a living, and they must have it. They were born to a certain amount of sunshine, and if they can find it at Glen-Eberley, while I'm master of it, they're welcome."

"Why, save you, cappin! They'll do nothing here for a living. They kain't work and they won't."

"Well, if they can't work here, they can work nowhere, sergeant."

"That's true! Let 'em starve then and be ——!"

"No! no! You don't say that from your heart—only from your head, sergeant, and your brains, just now, have got into a kink, in consequence of the care and anxiety which you feel about my fortunes. But don't be afflicted. Oakenberg and Dennison, should they come here, will both work for me, though perhaps not in the fields."

"I'd jest like to onderstand how, cappin."

"How!" quoth Porgy, emptying his pipe,—then looking up and around him, with a somewhat vacant gaze, silent the while, as if listening—after a few moments of pause he said—

"Do I not hear a bird? a mock-bird, singing? Hark! do you not hear it now?"

All parties appeared to listen; at length, says Millhouse,—

"It's the singing of the fire, I reckon, cappin. I don't hear nothing. It's too soon in the season for mocking birds to sing."

"No! not when the weather is good. I have heard them, years ago, in all the trees around the house, singing through the winter, and frequently at night, and all night. They attach themselves to old and well settled habitations, and will rear their gene-

nations for a thousand years in the same trees, if left undisturbed. They belong to man. I am disposed to think they were created for him, and to do this particular duty. You like their music, Mr. Fordham, do you not?"

"Well, cappin, I can't say that I ever hears 'em much, onless when somebody tells me to listen. As for liking their music, I confess, cappin, I'd much rather hear a good fiddle."

"And so would I," quoth Millhouse, "though I don't count fiddle music as much either. A good horn is my music, and I count a boat horn on the river as the sweetest of all kinds of music. I kin listen to that half a night, that is, when I ain't too much tired and hungry."

"I like that too, Millhouse, and I can relish a good fiddle in a crowd. But what would you think of a person who should tell you that he didn't relish the boat horn, Millhouse."

"Why, I'd say he might as well be stone deaf and blind too."

"At least, you wouldn't suppose he was any the better man for not having an ear for the music of the horn."

"No! I'd be thinking he was rather the worse for it."

"Precisely! well, you'll permit me to feel the music of a bird's song and not think me very foolish or wicked perhaps, if I say I like to hear it very much."

"Well, I s'pose not! Every man to his own liking, I reckon there's a sort of natur in every man's liking."

"Exactly! That's the very word. There is a nature in it; and it was to feed this nature, and to work upon it in a mysterious way, that God appointed the birds to build their nests in the trees that surround a man's dwelling. Now, you must know, that it is a fact, however curious, that singing birds never harbor in uninhabited countries. In our great forests, you never hear birds. The smaller birds would become the prey of the larger ones, and they shelter themselves in places which are inhabited in order to be safe. And they reward man for his protection, by their songs, and by the destruction of insects. Now, Millhouse, Dennison is one of my song birds. He sings for me when I am sad. He makes music for me which I love. It is soul music which I owe to him, which finds its way to the ear of the heart, and seems to fill it with sunshine. Now, I call that being very useful to me."

"I could see how 'twas useful of he was to eat up the grubs and insects, jest like the birds, but ——"

"And so he does, Millhouse. The grubs and insects of the heart are its cares, its anxieties, its sorrows, its bad feelings, and vexatious passions. He drives them away—he destroys them. He is appointed for this very purpose, and if men were wise, they would rejoice when they could have such a bird of the soul under their roof trees. It would prove that they *had* souls, if they could show that they have an ear for his music. Now, you are not any *better*, sergeant, because you want an ear for soul-music. It is your misfortune, Millhouse, and you ought to be sorry for yourself, not angry with the musician, whose songs you can't understand. You should pray for the proper understanding, and work for it, too; for you must know that an ear for music of all sorts is to be acquired; and the ear opens so as to correspond with the growing wishes of the heart, and the growing wisdom of the mind. You hear a great deal said, perhaps, of education. Everybody seems to wish for education. I have heard you deploring, very frequently, the fact that you had no schooling. Now, schooling and education are meant for this very purpose, to give us an ear for music—the music of birds as well as men, the music of the soul, as well as of the throat—music which fills the heart as well as the ear—music which is not only sweet, but wise—which not only pleases but makes good; for, after all, the great secret of education is to open all the ears—which we call *senses*—of a man, so that he can drink in all the harmonies of that world of music, which we commonly call life!—Do not, my dear sergeant, suppose you are any better because you do not comprehend such music as George Dennison makes; and do not suppose that George is any worse man because he is too apt to give away, and perhaps waste, the things which he needs himself, quite as much as the person to whom he gives them. George finds it profitable to give away—to waste! If you knew the satisfaction which he feels at making other people happy, you might be even more extravagant. He may be wrong, sometimes, in his giving; but you are not altogether right in judging him so harshly. He values certain things too little; you, perhaps, value the same things too much. You both may be forgiven your offences, which are due

to a want of proper education, provided you are modest enough never to censure the music which you do not understand."

Porgy lighted his pipe after this long speech. Millhouse scratched his head and looked dubious for a while; but after a brief pause, he resumed the subject in this fashion:—

"Well, cappin, all that may be very wise and sensible, though there's some of it I don't 'zackly understand; but I'm willing to let it pass this time. But supposing all you say of George Denison is true, and I reckon there's some reason in it, I'd like to know what sort of music you gits out of Doctor Oakenberg."

"Millhouse, do you remember a little Frenchman, named Pelot, that joined us when we were making the forced march after Gainey, toward the Great Pedee?"

"In course I do."

"Well, do you remember a reel in a bottle that he had, that amused half the soldiers, and was too much for all of them to get out of the bottle without breaking it."

"Yes, I tried it many a time myself."

"You knew that it was put into the bottle after the bottle was made, and that it could be taken out in the same manner?"

"In course."

"Well, did you ever hear that reel sing, or speak, while in the bottle?"

"Lord love you, no! How could it?"

"Did you ever see it come out of the bottle and dance?"

"Dicksance! no!"

"And you never saw it hoe, or cut wood, or kill game, or cook food, or make clothes, or fight the enemy, or do anything which you consider useful."

"Never!"

"Yet, you were curious about it. You tried many a time to find out the secret. It employed you—it interested you—it interested most of the soldiers; yet, in itself, it was perfectly worthless. It could neither sow nor spin, it could not even grow—it was of no sort of value to anybody in camp."

"That's true, cappin, though I never thought about it."

"Doctor Oakenberg is my reel in a bottle. His soul is my puzzle; how it got into his carcase—where it does nothing now but—where it does not even grow—is the problem which amuses

me. Now, Millhouse, whatever interests a man is valuable, though it neither works nor sings. Whatever may amuse a man is an important agent in his education. Whatever exercises the ingenuity of man, though it be a fool's brains, or a reel in a bottle, is worthy of his care and consideration. I assure you that should George Dennison, or Doctor Oakenberg, pay me a visit, they shall both be welcome. I shall find use in both of them."

Millhouse muttered something which was inaudible closing with—

"Well, cappin, ef they once comes, they sticks. You will never git rid of them."

"Be it so; the more helpless they are the more they pay for the shelter."

"How's that, when they've got nothing."

"God is good security for all the debts of the poor!"

Millhouse fidgetted; Fordham rose to depart. Porgy did not rise, but extended his hand from the fireside.

"Excuse me, Ms. Fordham. Sergeant"—in a whisper—"the Jamaica."

The hint was taken, and the two overseers hob-and-nobbed after the prescribed fashion. Our captain of partisans reminded Fordham of his intention to visit Mrs. Eveleigh next day, accompanied by his *subs*, and sent a courteous message to the lady, to that effect. When Fordham withdrew, Millhouse accompanied him into the piazza and down the steps, to his horse, which was fastened to a swinging limb in front.

"You hear what redick'lous notions the cappin's got about these here things; and a most wasteful man would he be, ef there wa'n't somebody to keep a tight rein over him;" and he made the motion, with his one hand, of pulling in the steed.—"I does it where I kin, but it stands to reason I kaint go too far, seeing as how he was my commanding officer, so long. But I gives it to him pretty plain, and right for'ad sometimes. But I aint the pusson altogether for it. In fact, Mr. Fordham, ef anything's to be done with the cappin, it must be by a woman—some raal lady that'll take his case in hand, and guide him right in his driving. Now, he's a raal good man, but a leetle shy of the womenkind, I'm a-thinking, though its strange it should be, seeing how long

he's been a sodger, that he's sort o' bashful. Ef he could git a fine woman now for a wife, a raal lady, I reckon it would be a wonderful good thing for both on 'em. See what a fine plantation he's got here, agoin' to ruin headlong in his hands onless I kin save it--and I'll try my best,—but I'd be sure of saving him and it too, ef so be he had a wife to back me in the business. So long as he's got no wife, you see, he'll be run down by these idle rascals of the army, that aint fit to do nothing but eat double 'lowance of grub, and swallow any quantity of Jamaica. You hear what he says of this fellow Oakenberg, who is a sort of yarb doctor, and a most extremelous fool,—and this George Dennison, who makes jingling stories,—that keeps a sort of time with every now and then, a tink-it-a-tank, tink-it-a-tank. Well, these chaps never works; they'll come here and eat us out of house and home, and all bekaise the cappin haint got a good sensible woman to back me when I wants her, and keep the cappin in order. You see, arter all, it's a good woman and a wife that he wants to make all things right ag'in on this plantation."

Fordham admitted the wisdom of this opinion.

"As for these idle fellows, they gits no incouragement from me. Ef I have the leetlest chance, I'll send both on 'em off, and all on 'em that comes, with a flea in their ears. I aint gwine let the cappin waste himself and his substance upon sich wagrints. I'll have to keep a strict line upon him, for ef he once gits the bit betwixt his teeth, there's no stopping him, and he'll smash and tear everything to pieces. 'Taint bekase he's naterally vicious, but so long as he's been living in the world, he aint grown bridle wise; but Lord bless you, a woman could manage him to prefection. It's the only saving of him and this fine property, and I'm glad you 'gree with me about it, Mr. Fordham."

Fordham shook himself free with difficulty. The sergeant had many last words, the burden of which invariably led to the repetition of the one opinion, that a wife was the one thing needful to the wants and safety of his superior.

CHAPTER XLII.

MILLHOUSE ON THE UTILITARIAN PHILOSOPHY.

"CAPPIN," says the sergeant, returning to the hall, where Porgy still sat, half drowsing, amidst voluminous wreaths of smoke which poured from his pipe, — "Cappin, you must 'scuse what I'm guine to say of I speaks to you mighty free, for you see, I'm your friend to sarve, and I reckon jest about as good a friend for honest, upright and downright sense and sarvice, as ever you had in all your born days. I don't mean to say that I love you better than some others, — say, the Ensign, and Tom, the cook, but I'm bold to determine, that I love you more sensible, and for sarving and helping sarvice, than a'most eny other person, let 'em be as wise as they please. That being the case, I say you must 'scuse me, of I make free to put you right in the way you've got to go, and show you how you've got to put your foot down for the rest of your journey in this life. You must 'scuse me, I say, of I roughs a leetle too hard sometimes along the tender places."

"Excuse you, Millhouse? oh! surely, my good fellow. You are usually so very modest and forbearing, tender and scrupulous, that you may well be permitted a little occasional roughness in helping a friend through the world."

"Zackly, cappin, you're right; you takes the right look at the thing as it ought to be, — sensible as I wants you."

"You are always tender, Millhouse, even in dealing with your enemies. I remember seeing you how a fellow, half in two with your sabre, then, as he was falling, drive the iron handle into his mouth, breaking every tooth in his head. Certainly, his teeth would only be a mortification to him, after he had lost all capacity to eat; — and yet, Millhouse, I should like to be buried in possession of a good mouthful of them. Your tenderness in my case, is of a like fashion always; and if, as a good surgeon, you should occasionally be compelled to be a little rough — probing wounds

already healed, or such as are absolutely incurable, in order not satisfy yourself that there *are* some sensibilities yet remaining to the patient—I am clearly of opinion that you should be allowed the privilege of doing so, if only that the humanities of your nature should be kept lively, and in becoming exercise."

"Jest so; and I must say for you, cappin, that sometimes you're quite sensible, and have a good onderstanding of what's right and proper in affairs of business. Ef you didn't so much love sich company as George Dennison and Oakenburg, there's no telling, how knowing you'd be; and ef you'd only shet up, and not talk about things no common-sense pusson can onderstand, it would be a great deal the better for you. Now, you don't think that this good fellow, Fordham, know'd what you meant to say when you was a-going it about Dennison's po'try, and soul music, and all sich fly-away matters? I could onderstand it all, bekaise I've hearn you at it, day and night, throughout the campaigns.—But how was he to l'arn it? You might jest as well hev' talked it to the man in the moon. And what was the use of it, ef he did onderstand? Why, he wouldn't valley it a continental d—n, which everybody knows won't buy a calabash of skim milk. Now, as you don't know nothing about farming, or rice-planting, and as you hevn't any sober idee about any sort of business except fighting,—and I say it, myself, you're prime good at that—I'm a-thinking that you'd better shet up quite, when goin it in company with men of business like Fordham and me, and jest listen to what we're a saying. You'll l'arn something by it, I tell you."

"Do you really think so, sergeant?"

"I swow, but I does. It's the only way to l'arn."

"It looks reasonable. Leave off talking myself and listen to you and Fordham."

"Jest so! and ef there was any other sensible white man, of *business*, you might listen to him too; for *on*derstand me, I'm not pretending that Fordham and me are the only people having a right sense of things in this world.—There's other people, I reckon, that have learned something of business; though they're rather scarce in these pairts."

"It's possible! Well."

"But there's a time when you might open, and hev' your say.

cappin; that's when you gits among people who has likings like yourself; young fellows who aint got ixperence in the world,—women folks,—and sich like."

"You think I may venture to talk among the women, then?"

"Edzactly, cappin; women are weak vessels that aint expected to be reasonable, and things will tickle their ears that are only foolishness in the ears of a sensible man. They will listen to sich stuff as po'try and music, and all the time they're a losing the profits. They're made to sing, and to dance, and to dress up, and make themselves sweet to please the men when the day's work's over; and Lord, cappin, you kaint say hardly anything amiss, in the way of wanity and foolishness, ef so be you says it lovingly, and with a sawt of fondness in your eyes all the time. Now, I've hearn you talk to women, and you knows pretty much what the critters loves to hear. You kin talk it to them, by long stretches, and make it smooth travelling all the way. It's when you gits among them that I'm willing for you to open."

"You are certainly indulgent, sergeant. I am to understand then, that, whenever there are ladies in the presence, I have permission to speak."

"Premission aint the word, cappin, for you see, you're your own master, and kin speak always, whenever you're a mind to, no matter who's in company."

"Oh! Ah!"

"It's jest, you see, as I'm idvising you, for your own good. 'Taint bekase I've got any power to shet or open your mouth, but I wants you to see, for your own self, what's best for your own benefit. You see your ixperence is jest none at all in the way of business. You don't know what's useful in the world. You only know what's pleasant, and amusing, and ridickilous, and what belongs to music, and poetry, and the soul; and not about the wisdom that makes crops grow, and drives a keen bargain, and swells the money-box, and keeps the kiver down. Now, I reckon, you'd always git the worst of it at a horse-swap. You'd be cheated with a blind horse, or a spavin'd, and you'd go off on three legs, though you come on four. Now, ef there's wisdom in this world—that is *raal* wisdom—it is in making a crop, driving a bargain, gitting the whip hand in a trade, and always falling, like a cat, on one's legs. As for music and po'try

and them things, it's all flummery. They don't make the pot bile. I likes the fiddle when there's a crowd, and after the day's work's done, and the horses fed; but of there's one music in the world that's more sweet than another to the ears of a man of sense, it's the music that keeps time to the money coming in I'm minded of what was said by a man up on the Edisto, not very far from Orangeburg, who was jest about the most sensible white man of all that country. He was one time at a sort of ball, or party, in the village, and there was a lady who was playing on the ha'psichord and singing, and she said to him, 'Squire, does you love music?' then he up and said—'Music, ma'am! kaint say that I does, 'cept one kind.' And says she, 'What kind's that, Squire?' Says he—'Ma'am, that's the music of my mills on the Edisto; they keeps a grinding and a sawing night and day, and all the time they seems to be a singing in my ears—"Dollar! dollar! dollar, oh! dollar! dollar! dollar, oh!" That's the music for me, ma'am!' and sure enough, that was what I call useful, business, mercantile music. He made a fortin by it, and died worth, Lord knows how much, but they did say, a'most four hundred thousand dollars! But any other kind of music is apt to draw the money out; not bring it in; and that's the sin of it. It is, I say, a sinful practice that's always a dreaning the pockets, and never putting anything in."

"It is clear, Millhouse, that you have studied the philosophy of music with great closeness. You are evidently well prepared to be a teacher. You counsel me to speak as much about poetry and music to the ladies, as I please, but to avoid it wholly among men of sense, unless, indeed, I have something to say about mercantile music."

"That's it! For, look you, cappin, jest give a look round to the world—" and here the sergeant rose, and stretched his one arm out with measured movement, circling the hall, as if grasping the poles—"look round at all the world, and wherever you look you see that the great needcessity everywhere is the gitting of bread. When I says, gitting of bread, I means, of course, gitting of bread and meat, and drink, clothes to wear, and the tools to work with. But bread and meat is the first and greatest needcessity; for without it, there would be no world, nor no men, nor

no women. Now, then, what does I larn from that. Jest answer me that."

"Well, sergeant, what *you* would learn from it, it might be difficult for me to say; you have studied the subject so profoundly that it is not easy to follow you."

"Well, cappin, it *ought* to be cl'ar to you, but I'll show you. I larn from all that that the great business of men on this airth is eating—that is to say, eating and drinking, and clothing—fighting agin starvation and thirst and cold weather."

"It is certainly a business that is done pretty extensively—universally I suppose, since I have never known a man or woman refuse to eat at proper hours."

"And onproper hours too, and at all hours, cappin; that is ef they hev' it. And the business of life is to hev' it. Now, ef that be the great business of life, it stands to reason that them ockypations what don't bring in bread and meat and drink, or the money to buy it, is *on*reasonable, *on*natural, and *on*respectable ockypations. Aint it cl'ar to you so?"

"I'm afraid, sergeant, if I make any farther admissions you'll be for knocking George Dennison on the head."

"Accordin' to the argyment, he and Oakenberg, and all of them worthless sawt of people, that only makes music and not bread, ought to be knock'd on the head; as Scriptur says of the tree that don't bring fruit, 'hew it down and cast it into the fire.' Well, the laws of the land don't follow out the laws of God. Ef we was to cut down them idle fellows that sing and make varses when they ought to be at the plough tail, we'd be hung a'most without jedge or jury, jest as ef we'd been doing agin the laws of Scriptur, instead of following them out rightly. The men that makes the laws of man, cappin, I'm jubous, are mighty poor followers of the laws of God. Ef they wasn't, we'd git rid of a mighty great deal of rubbish."

"Well, but, sergeant, when a man has earned all the bread and meat, and drink, and clothing, that he needs, is he to be satisfied?"

"Satisfied! no! He's to work on, and on, and what he's got over and above his wants, he's to send to market and sell, and git all the money for it he kin."

"Ah! well,—what is he to do with that money?"

"Why, increase his force, and his land, to be sure."

"Why, that will only increase his money!"

"To be sure; and that's what he's to aim at. He's to go on gitting, and gitting, and gitting, to the end of the season, ontill Death gits him. As he gits, he kin increase his comforts—git better bread, more meat, pass from apple and peath brandy to old Jamaica—ef he likes it, git wine,—though I never seed the wine yet that could shine the same day in the face of good Jamaica:—git better clothing; hev' his horse to ride; prehaps his carriage, and jist make himself a sort of king, in the way of comforts."

"Well, these got,—should he spend his money on nothing else?"

"Nothing, that I kin see. He's got all that's needful. Then he's for gitting as good bargains as he kin—then he's for gitting to be a ruler ef he kin—gitting to be a colonel or a gineral in the militia; gitting to be a representative and a senator in the legislatur; gitting to be a justus of the peace; gitting to be a sawt of king over the people, and making them all feel that he's got the money to buy and sell 'em, every mother's son of 'em, ef he pleases."

"Well, that must be a very delightful sensation. But would you not use some of this money for charity—would you not give Oakenberg his living, if only to catch snakes and make a collection? Would you not help Dennison to his dinner?"

"Not a copper on your singing birds and idlers. They should starve for me. Not a fellow that wouldn't work would I feed."

"But, Millhouse, you would do something for religion, wouldn't you?"

"Why, to be sure. It's expected of a rich man that he'll go rigilar to church and set a good example, and help pay for the preacher, and put something every month in the charity box, and be decent and rigilar, jist that he mayn't lose by it, sence people respects religion, and it might be onprofitable, and hurtful to one's business, ef he didn't make good signs that people should see. To be sure, I go for religion that's right, and every right religion's bound to uphold the man who is rich and helps to pay expenses."

"You have admirably grasped the whole subject of profitable

duty, sergeant. I should not have answered exactly as you have done, on the subject of charity and religion; but I have no doubt that you have answered as correctly and fully as the most profound utilitarian philosophers would have done. And now, what say you to a little Jamaica? It's a part of your system to drink as well as eat."

"It's the needful, cappin."

The Jamaica and water were brought by Pompey, and when their cups were filled, quoth Porgy—

"Well, Millhouse, considering the lesson you've been giving me, suppose we drink to the man who is wise enough to open his mouth only in the proper company."

"That's it, cappin; jist you mind what I've been telling you, and you'll work upward yit into cl'ar water. You're quick to l'arn, I see; and only you give up this foolish po'try and soul music, 'cept when you're among the women—and listen with good will to what men of business and sense is a telling you, and there's no saying how sensible you'll grow in time. Here's your health—and the Lord preserve you, cappin, and git you into a strong position agin the approaches of the sheriff."

CHAPTER XLIII.

MILLHOUSE TREATETH TOUGHLY OF THE TENDER GENDER.

Suddenly the barking of a dog was heard without.

"It's a dog!" quoth Millhouse. "Some nigger dog, I reckon. I'll kill every nigger dog I see on the place. You hear that, Tom! you hear Pomp! 'member it, boys. I don't 'low nigger dogs on any place where I'm manager. I knows what's the natur of a nigger dog, cappin, and what they're kept for."

"But, won't that be rather hard, sergeant? a negro likes coon and possum. Ask Tom there about possum."

"Possum better than pig, maussa."

"We almost learned to think so ourselves, sergeant, in the army. How often should we have gone without meat but from dogs bringing in coon and possum."

"All coon dogs, on this place, cappin, must be owned by a white man; by you, by me, or by the lieutenant. A nigger dog is a *hog-dog* by nater; and where the nigger eats one possum, he eats five pigs. It's the infarmity of a nigger's dog and a nigger too, that a fat pig makes his eyes run water. No nigger dog here, cappin, onless you says so."

"But, sergeant, even if it be, as you say, that a negro dog is always a hog dog, and I'm perfectly prepared to believe the assertion, still there would be no harm in having such an animal at Glen-Ebenezer, since it will be wonderful if a solitary pig is to be found on the premises."

There was no gainsaying this humiliating fact, and it took the sergeant all aback for a moment, but only for a moment. He was a man of resources and prompt reply.

"But they'll come, cappin; pigs will hev' to come! You'll hev' to git half a dozen brood sows with your first money, and begin to stock the plantation."

"Well, corporal, wont it be quite time enough then to get rid of the dogs?"

"It's a shorter way not to let 'em begin to harbor here. Lay down the law at the beginning. That's my way wherever I manages, and then there's no mistake."

The barking of the dog now became more audible without, the sounds alternating with sundry lively blasts of a bugle.

"It's Lance Frampton," said the captain; and the tread of horse's hoofs succeeded to the words. In a few moments the young lieutenant entered the apartment, accompanied by a good-looking dog of a somewhat mongrel aspect, a sort of cross of wolf, cur, and beagle—which shrunk back timidly toward the entrance, on finding himself confronted with so many strange faces—or, he might possibly have seen something in the looks of the sergeant to inspire him with a proper caution.

"Where did you get your dog, Lance?"

"From Mrs. Griffin, captain. She had two and only wants one, and she tells me this is a famous fine coon dog, which is no use to her as she can't hunt, so she gave it to me. We want fresh meat, captain, and I'm for a hunt this very night, if I can get some of the boys to go."

Pomp, who was in attendance, began to grow fidgety.

"There's a volunteer already," quoth Porgy, pointing to Pomp; "he has shifted his carcass from one leg to the other a dozen times since the dog made his appearance. Do you want to take a coon to-night, Pomp?"

"T'ank you, maussa, I berry happy, ef you please."

"To be sure, old fellow. I'm quite pleased if you can make yourself happy by the performance."

"I guine too," exclaimed Tom, the cook, who had just at that moment thrust his oily face into the apartment. "I too hungry arter coon. I usen to been know all 'bout de coon and possum quarters on dis place; and I tell you, ef dere's anybody yer wid sense to find de fattest warmints yer he am!—me, Tom."

"They'll all go ef you let 'em," growled the sergeant. "They'll hunt all night and won't be worth a cuss to work to-morrow. Look you, Tom, don't carry off all the hands with you; let 'em sleep. You and Pomp are quite enough, or you may take one other fellow with you. Three on you ought to empty the woods of all the possums in 'em."

"I yeddy [sometimes *yerry*, otherwise 'hear you'] mass Millh'us," answered Tom impatiently, and by no means seeming to relish the voice of authority from that quarter: "Tom know berry well wha' for do in he maussa business. Coon and possum mus' be ketch in de time when der's no fresh meat for de pot.—So!—Pomp!—Look at me, boy!"

"I da look, uncle Tom," said Pomp reverently.

"Tom berry quick for march, boy, but you hab for larn some ting fuss. You bin in camp ebber, you'd ha' been larn at de rope's *end*. Tek' dat bucket, boy, and run to de spring and git de water. Spose maussa want for drink when you gone and der's no water? Spose gemplemans, cusifers and ginerals, happen for come in when you gone and maussa hab for ax 'em to swallow de raw rum—enty you'll feel mean 'nough when you yer 'bout it! Git de water, boy; 'tir [stir] you' stumps, and help Peter git de lightwood. Der mus' be coon fight to-night, ef dem tory rascal aint eat de country out."

This was said pretty much in such an aside to Pomp as the stage tolerates. Meanwhile, Frampton was making his report to the captain, of his day's visit, and of certain friendly messages of Mrs. Griffin and daughter, in response to those with which

Porgy had commissioned his lieutenant. The former appeared to take quite an interest in these particulars; a circumstance that seemed to produce some uneasiness in the sergeant. After a while he interposed with —

"You're making a mighty long story of it, lieutenant, and I'm a-thinking you're a burning daylight. Ef you are to hunt the coons, the sooner you're off the better—the sooner you'll be back, and the niggers git their sleep and be ready for a good day's work to-morrow."

Frampton quietly took the counsel, whistled his dog down the steps of the piazza into the court where Tom was already busied in hewing lightwood for the necessary torches. So soon as he had disappeared, Porgy said—

"Why, what the d—l sort of work can you put the negroes at to-morrow, Millhouse? What's to be done?"

"A hundred things; rails to be split; fences to be made; poles to be got out for nigger houses; land to be broke up for planting; ditches to be cut; banks *im*paired;—there's no saying how much is to be done!"

"But where are the tools, my good fellow, the hoes, shovels, axes, ploughs——"

"Don't you mind, cappin. I'm overseer, aint I? Well, I've seed to all that. *On*der the piazza is all them spades, and shovels we've been a using to-day; and Mr. Fordham told me, without my axing, that he could spare me a few ploughs and axes, and other little matters, *ex*till you could lay in supplies in town. He said 'twas the orders of Madam Eb'leigh that I should hev' 'em."

"Mrs. Eveleigh is certainly as provident as she is liberal!" remarked the captain.

"And it's them very vartues, cappin, that you're a-wanting here to make the pot bile, and to see that it don't bile over. Ef you'll keep your eyes right, cappin, you won't let the chaince slip of getting yourself into good quarters. It's cl'ar to me that Mrs. Eb'leigh's giving you the right sort of signs, and you'll be the blindest sawt of a sarcumstance of a white man, ef you don't take the right motion from what she shows. A nod's as good as a wink to a blind horse, and the man that wants more than the pull of a sleeve, from a fine woman, to understand what she

wants, why I'm a thinking he aint the valley of a dead dog with three buzzards pulling different ways at his carkiss. I'm considerate of you, cappin, and your sarcumstances, and I'm cl'ar to say that the charitablest thing you kin do, when you see how the cat wants to jump, is jest to open the window, and give her a cl'ar track. Don't you be waiting upon Providence tell some wiser man walks in and takes the fat turkey off the nest. I'd be at her, bright and airly, to-morrow, and I wouldn't wait a week, ef she's willing, before I brought her home to your own roost."

"You're quick on trigger, sergeant. Does it not sometimes occur to you that you're a very rapid man?"

"I reckon 'tis bekaise I was born in a hurry. I came into the world in a hurry, and never waited for the midwife. I grow'd up in a hurry, and in all sawts of wickedness. I reckon no person ever l'arned his vices so quick as me. I never seemed to want book or teacher. Lord love you, I charged into 'em, jist as I charged among the inimy's baggage, and held on to 'em as loving as if they was so many army stores, with the money chist in the middle. If I had any vartues, they come slower, but I was pretty fast with them too; and fast motion is a vartue by itself, when you've got to do with man or woman, friend or inimy. For, what's the truth, cappin? Lord love you, there aint much time 'lowed to a man in this life. What he's got to do, he's got to do in a hurry, ef it's to be done at all. Ef he pokes and saunters, grim Death gobbles him up afore he gits to the eend of his journey. Well, this courtin' of a woman is jist the sawt of business that calls for fast usage. It's a sawt of race where the hindmost wins nothing but loses. You kaint stop to look behind you. You must go ahead, jist as if the d—l had you on an eend, and you had no chaince to git on and off, but by bolting like a mad bull, even though you should lose your skairts in the run. And a woman of ixperance likes a man the better if he gives her no time for long thinking. Courtin' is like storming an inimy's batteries. Women expects naterally to be taken by storm. They likes a good ixcuse for surrenderin'. You must go it with a rush, sword in hand, looking mighty fierce, and ready to smite and tear everything to splinters; and jist then she drops into your arms and stops the massacree by an honest

givin' in. 'You're too strong for me, I see,' says she, when she surrenders—'so' she goes on, 'only spare my life and take everything I've got;' and she gives herself in into the bargain; —what we sodgers calls a surrinder at discretion. But you must jest show her that you are determined to conquer; that you kain't be mareiful; that you must hev' everything or lose everything; and that your name's 'master' from the beginning."

"Really, sergeant, you must have enjoyed a wonderful experience among the sex."

"It's hard to say what I hevn't seed in my time, among all sorts of people; an' it's hard to say where my ixperance eends in dealing with people—man and woman. I'm showing you, cappin, by the teachin' I'm a-giving you."

"You are a sage, grave counsellor, Millhouse, and I am bound to suppose—being myself inexperienced, particularly among women—that you counsel wisely. But have you only a single rule for your operations? Is it possible that you recognise no difference among women, and that you use the same policy with all?"

"Lord love you, no! In course, you're to onderstand that man is the born master; but every master knows that you manage hands differently, each one accordin' to his natur. But woman is born with a knowing that some day she's got to find a master. That makes her ready for him when he comes. But it skears some, them in perticklar that haint got no ixperence. With a woman of ixperence, storming's the way;—and a fort, you know, that's been once stormed knows all about it, and kin be easily stormed agin. But the fort that's never been taken, is to be managed different. You don't let sich a fort see all your strength at once. You don't show all your sodgers in front. You manœuvres, and marches and countermarches. You don't let the garrison see where you're guine to make the attack. You approaches cautious, cappin, and you works by sap. But I needn't tell you of what's needful in works of war. I only mean to show by a sawt of picter which you onderstand, how you're to work with women. The young gal you captures by insinivations, but the widow Eb'leigh's no young gal. She's had ixperence of things; and you're to conquer her jest by storming and 'scalade. Put on your biggest thunder now, cappin, and go to the attack

with a shout and a rush, and dang my peepers ef she don't surrender at the first summons."

"Certainly, you hold forth a very encouraging prospect. But, sergeant, marriage is a very serious business. To a man who has been free all his life, has had nobody to restrain his conduct, outgoings and incomings, there is something positively frightful in the kind of bondage which it makes. It sometimes happens that instead of the woman getting a master, the man gets a mistress. There's a great part of this in most marriages. To reconcile one to the danger, I suppose, the passion of love was invented——"

"Love! Oh! Lord, don't talk of sich child's play as that, I beg you! Marriage is business; 'taint love. It's airnest work; 'taint sport! Nobody, I reckon, marries for the sport of the thing, ef he's once cut his eye-teeth. Your boy and gal marriages is a sort of baby house business. When we talks to grown men and women about the thing, we means an argyment, and a reason, and a sense, and a needcessity. You aint surely guine to tell me of likes and dislikes in the business. Nobody ixpects you at your time o' life, to have any sich child feeling of love, sich as works upon infant young fellows, that's just begun to l'arn the run of the woods."

"But I confess, sergeant, if I am to marry, I should like to consult my tastes in the matter. I confess that I believe myself not a bit too old to have an affection."

"'Fections mustn't stand in the way of business. How's the case? You're bad off in plantation *sar*cumstances. You want everything, and kaint, by your own self, keep what you've got. Well, jest beside you there stands a rich widow. She's well off in plantation sarcumstances. She kin save everything for you. Isn't the case cl'ar enough to a person with only ha*fe* an onderstanding."

"Still, I am for having a certain feeling satisfied—call it taste, or affection, love or what you will, sergeant, if I'm to marry and lose my liberty, I must know that my jailor is a lovely one."

"Oh! Lord, cappin, don't be foolish and ridickilous. I've no patience with such etarnal throat-cutting sentiments. Don't you resk the best chance in the country on sich foolish idees. What right hev' you, at you time of day, and in your sarcumstances

to talk about sich boy and gal sentiments. Here you're at forty-five, with your head gitting as grey as ef 'twas rolled over in a meal bag;—with your body all of a heap in the middle, and the pins mighty slender for sich a weight to go upon; and your sarcumstances all in a kink, and knotted upon with the fingers of that etarnal warmint, the sheriff;—and yet you're a-talking of love, and sentiments, and defections, jest as ef you knowd no more of human natur than a lad of seventeen, who's jest beginning to spread sail for a breeze. I kaint let you talk sich foolish idees, cappin! 'Twont do, I tell you. I wont hev' it! You shan't throw away the good fortin', jest as it's a-tumbling, ripe into your mouth, ef I kin help it. 'Twould be a sort of right that your friends would have to give you a good choking first."

"Ah!" said Porgy, drily,—"such friendship as you describe is somewhat rare, sergeant."

"As I'm a living man, cappin, I'd be the man to do the thing ef 'twas for your good and to save you; and I'd do it jest as free and bold as your own self when you surgined my arm to the saving of my life—I would!"

"Thank you, sergeant, thank you! I acknowledge the peculiar frankness of your friendship, but trust never to make it necessary for my friends to choke me, in order to make me take my medicine."

"Fruit, not physic, cappin."

"Well, fruit!—But suppose there are other fruits that I happen to like better than that which you offer me. Suppose, to speak more to the point, there should happen to be another woman whom I happen to like better than Mrs. Eveleigh?"

"Ha! is it that? Well, the only thing to ax—is the other woman in the same sarcumstances as Mrs. Eb'leigh,—ready and able to help you out of the halter of the sheriff?"

"Don't name the animal quite so often, sergeant, if you please."

"Well, I wont; but I ax agin—is the other woman as well off as the widow Eb'leigh? Has she as many goulden guineas, as many niggers?—"

"Not a stiver that I know of—not the hair of a negro."

"Can't be, cappin, you're thinking of the widow Griffin?" exclaimed the sergeant, rising to his feet and confronting Porgy with a look of blank astonishment—"

"Griffin is a prettier woman than Mrs. Eyeleigh."

"Diccance! cappin! what hev' you got to do with purty women. What's a purty woman to a man in your sarcumstances?"

"Why, Millhouse, do you suppose, because a man wants money, he must also want good taste."

"Taste!—that's another of them foolish idees! I thought I had given you a right notion of all sich things. A man what's poor and in danger of the sheriff has no right to hev' a taste."

"But suppose he can't help it, sergeant—suppose he *has* the taste whether he wills or no?"

'Then the Lord have marcy on his *sar*cumstances. But, cappin, you kaint afford to hev' a taste for the widow Griffin. She's a mighty comely woman, I confess; but comely in a woman is as comely brings. It's not what a woman looks, but what she owns, that makes the comely; and you kaint afford to encourage her ixpectations, of she's got any. Your business is with widow Eb'leigh, and you kaint git over the needcessity afore you, try it as you may. It's a law of natur, in your sarcumstances, that you marries her, and nobody else!"

Porgy was silent, looking thoughtfully into the fire, his pipe hanging over his knee, forgotten in his grasp. Millhouse rose, at the close of the last speech, in which he had uttered his decree as emphatically as if it had been that of the Medes and Persians, and motioned with his one arm to the Jamaica.

"Aint you thirsty, cappin?"

"No, sergeant, but I am sure that *you* are very *dry*. Help yourself, and don't wait on me."

"It's a bad sign when a travelling horse won't drink, cappin."

"True, sergeant, but though one man may carry a horse to water, ten can't make him drink, when he's not willing."

"Why, Lord, love you cappin, there oughtn't to be any great onwillingness for you to marry the widow Eb'leigh. She's got a mighty sweet face."

"True."

And a mighty plump figure."

"True."

'And the whitest skin, cl'ar red and white; and sich a soft blue eye, and sich sweet lips, so red and ripe like;" and the sergeant swallowed half the contents of the cup, and smacked

his lips as heartily as if in the actual encounter with those of the widow.

"And she's young for her age, and with sich a nice, full figger; not a bit too stout, not over fat, but jest right. Why, cappin, ef taste, as you call it, was to decide, and the taste was a downright honest, good sodger taste, why it would choose the widow Eb'leigh a thousand times before the widow Griffin."

"I will drink, sergeant," said Porgy, rising and approaching the barrel, on the head of which the water jug, the Jamaica and the cup, found a temporary asylum. He filled, and when about to drink, he said:

"You are a philosopher, sergeant, such as the world everywhere respects. But though your philosophy succeeds pretty generally, in the world, *you* never would."

"*En*' why not, cappin?"

"Because the chief secret of the success of such a philosophy as yours is that it never vaunteth itself. It's professors never publish their virtues as you do. They are content to practise in secret what you mistakenly praise. They *do* what you *preach*, and *preach* against what they themselves *do*. Pride thus discourseth of humility with moist lips; selfishness thus becomes eloquent in its exhortations to self-sacrifice; and the good preacher will possess himself of the fattest ewe lamb of the flock while insisting on the beauties of a perpetual lent. But what say you to bed? It will be some hours, I fancy, before the lieutenant and the boys get back from their coon hunt, and we may enjoy a good sleep meanwhile. We must also rise soon in the morning, that we may see what we are to wear to-morrow. There must be some patching of my garments, before I shall be able perfectly to appear at the widow's table; and you too, in all probability, will need some adhesive plasters, front and rear."

"I'm glad you're a-thinking of that, cappin. You must put on your best front, and put your best foot for'ad, for, jest hev' what tastes and idees you think proper, you kaint git off from marrying that widow."

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE GHOST AT GLEN-EBERLEY EMBRACES THE SERGEANT *vi et armis.*

WHEN Porgy had retired, Millhouse mixed for himself another cup of Jamaica, with water, laid it down before the fire, drew a blanket up to the hearth, squatted upon it, pulled off his shoes, and exposed his naked feet to the blaze. He replenished his pipe, drew a keg near his back, leaned against it with the air of a man who was about to enjoy life philosophically, and, with a few vigorous puffs, encircled his head with a becoming atmosphere of cloud and vapor. With the momentary removal of the pipe from his jaws, he moistened his lips with the Jamaica. He again dried them with a puff, and again moistened them with the provided beverage. The philosophic mood thus properly stimulated, he began, *sotto voce*, to soliloquize upon affairs and things around him, his reflections prompted by the conviction that he had been gratefully opening the eyes of his superior to truths and a wisdom which the other was slow to arrive at.

"He's down in the mouth! He aint in good sperrits. It's a needcessity to make him see how the matter stands, and what he's got to do in his *per*dicaments. Well, to say truth, for a wise man, and a smart man, and a man what's seen sarvice, the cappin is jest about as foolish as a young person of sixteen. And it's mighty strange at his age, he should be so bashful. Here, it's cl'ar to every man what's got an eye to anything, that this here rich widow is ready with the bridal garmints. She's to be had for the axing. I watched her mighty close when they war a-talking together, and ef ever a woman's eye said, 'Look at me, I'm at your sarvice, stranger,' her eye said that same thing to the cappin. Yet, for all that, his cussed bashfulness won't see and believe it. But he shan't want for the incouragings to make him come up to the rack and taste the fodder. It's good fodder

well-cured fodder, and a plentiful armful of it too; and there's good corn where the fodder comes from, and he shall crack that corn, ef he's got a tooth in his head, and ef he haint, I'll hev' it ground for him. But eat it he shall! Don't I see the woman likes him to kill. And he aint an onlikely pusson in any woman's sight. Ef 'twarn for his almighty gairth, he'd be a figure to go through an army of women, and take his pick as he went. I'll take a hand at gitting her to-morrow, and I'll see that Tom takes in his belt a few holes closer. He must be made to look his best. Ef he had some new clothes now! His old buffs are mighty full of stains. 'Twont do to wash buff breeches in swamp water no how, and to dust 'em with swamp mud hurts their complexion more than the water. But with good brushing we kin make 'em pass. A-most everything in the way of clothes will pass where a woman's eye's already quite full of the pusson himself."

Putting the pipe into his mouth, he drew it, fiercely, and send forth several enormous jets of smoke, which kept up the due philosophic consistency in the atmosphere, then taking another sup of the Jamaica in order to maintain his own mental consistency, he proceeded, still in under-tones, to soliloquize in respect to his superior.

"Talk of Mrs. Griffin! What kin Mrs. Griffin do for him? What kin he do for Mrs. Griffin? Why it's jest the same as ef we tied both of 'em in a poke together, and gin em to the sheriff to sell at public cry! And who'd buy? The price they'd bring wouldn't pay for the cost of selling. The woman's good looking enough — mighty good looking I'd say, and jest the sort of woman to suit *me*, ef there was any sense in *my* marrying at all. Whether I'd be wanting a wife would a-most altogether depend on the sort of eencome I could git out of it. She's got a small place, nice farm enough, a good comfortable house upon it, with a horse and a cow, and a few pigs and chickens; and ef there was nobody but her one, — why it might be no bad sencé for me to be 'greeable and take her; but there's her marriageable da'ter, guine to be married too, to the Lieutenant, and leetle enough there'll be for the three to feed on. 'Twont do! a sensible marriage, for a man, means the bettering of his *sar*cumstances, and there's no bettering in sich a business.

When one marries, it's the sarcumstances that he's got to consider, and not the woman that hangs on to 'em. It's neither for me nor the cappin to think of the widow Griffin, though ef it's to be done by either on us, why it's for me to do it. It's the t'other woman's sarcumstances that he's got to consider, and he'll hev' to come to the scratch whether he wants to or no."

A renewed puffing at the pipe was followed by another sip of the Jamaica, and the utilitarian philosopher proceeded, still *sotto voce*, to consider "the sarcumstances."

"Everything 'pends on what he does and says to-morrow. I'll be thar, and I'll push him for'ad. I'll make the chance for him and the argyment too, ef so be I sees him playing shilly-shally. It's mighty fortinit for the cappin that she axed me to go too. I reckon she seed for herself, that I know'd something that aint to be larned in books, and it's fortinit for the cappin that I'm his friend, that aint guine to see him lose a good game without telling him when it's the right time to fling down trumps! I must put the lieutenant up to help me, and Tom kin throw in a word, seasonable, to strengthen the argyment. And may I be eternally squashed under a mountain of swamp, fenced in with alligators, ef we don't git possession of that widow and all she's got."

Another succession of fierce puffs at the pipe, and then a renewed moistening of the lips with the Jamaica. The soliloquy was then resumed:—

"She's got more than a hundred niggers, I reckon. That's Tom's thinking. She aint got no debts to pay, and aint afeared of no sheriff. She must divide them niggers betwixt the two places, hafe here and hafe there; and then we'll see which makes the best crops, Fordham or me! Fordham's a good enough chap I'm a thinking; but he aint had the benefit of seeing the world in the army. I made good rice, I reckon, 'fore ever Fordham seed backwater. When a man lives always in one place he he don't know much and kaint l'arn nothing. I'll show him the good of army life for bringing sense into a family. As for the drill among the niggers, I reckon I'll make him open his eyes wider than ever any tarrapin lying on the flat of his back, and the water biling fast for him to thicken. Ef I don't beat him at a crap, then my daddy had no right to his own son!"

The sergeant continued to muse and speculate, for two goodly hours after his worldly fashion. Porgy's chamber was silent. He probably slept. So thought Millhouse. Frampton was still absent on his coon and possum hunt; on which enterprise he had been accompanied by Tom, Pomp, and several other negroes, all eager to procure a supply of fresh meat, and to renew sports which always brought them pleasure. It might be hours still before they would return, since it requires, sometimes, a large circuit of woodland and swamp before the dog scents his prey. Millhouse, in the meantime, had ceased to soliloquize. He had been kept wakeful a long time, in consequence of the singular variety and activity of his scheming fancies; but he was beginning to succumb to drowsiness. He had emptied his pipe of its ashes, swallowed the last drop of the Jamaica, and pushing away the keg from his back, prepared to roll himself up in his blankets, when he fancied he heard a footfall in the back piazza. In half listless mood he listened. The step ceased, and he drowsed. Then he was awakened by what he thought a rustling against the door. He raised himself up, threw a brand on the fire, which was beginning to sink, and saw it kindle and blaze up brightly. Remembering the robbery of the previous night, he kept his eyes keenly fixed upon the door. He was afraid to rise for his pistols, which lay in the opposite corner, lest he should frighten off the intruder, and he was too anxious to get at him to suffer this, if possible. He resolved, accordingly, to wait till the last moment. All on a sudden, while he looked and listened, the door was pushed open, and a tall female figure stood before him in the dusky opening. There was evidently female drapery —*that* he could distinguish—but all else was undiscernable He remembered, for the first time, that the captain had told him, the night previous, that the house was haunted; and the thought now seized him that this was the ghost. The sergeant was brave enough, as the world goes, but he could not prevent a strange uncomfortable shudder from passing through him. He did not will to believe in ghosts, but what else could be the intruder?

"Who's it?" he cried out, after a pause, in accents somewhat less confident and formidable than those in which he had discoursed to Porgy of the proper philosophy.

"Who's thar?" he demanded; and the stranger advanced into

the room,—a tall, slender form in a sort of loose, dingy white garment, the draping of which seemed somewhat to confine its movements. It happened, vexatiously enough, that the fire upon the hearth, which had blazed up brightly enough but a moment before, seemed almost to expire; a circumstance so aptly associated with the presence of the stranger as somewhat to confirm the fancy of the sergeant that she was certainly the household ghost. He remembered, in an instant, what he had heard in his young days of the lights burning dimly and blue, in the presence of the spectre, and he could conceive of no less influence which could so effectually, and in an instant, deprive 'fat lightwood' of its proper inflammable virtues. He began to feel more and more disquieted, while the silence of the intruder added to his doubts. Again he cried out, this time raising his head, if not his voice,—and speaking with prodigious effort—

"Who's it thar, I say?"

The answer dispelled his apprehensions immediately.

"Da you, my chile?"

The voice was that of a negro as well as a female.

"Who's afraid of a nigger ghost!" exclaimed the sergeant aloud—and rising to a sitting posture.

"Who's you! I say! and what hev' you come for."

"It's me, my chile! It's you own ole woman—Sappho! Enty you member de ole woman—you own nuss,—de same Sappho wha' bin mind you a t'ousand times. De Lawd be praise for bring you back—dat de ole woman kin hug he chile once more, fore he dead for ebber."

With these words the speaker darted forward, and, falling upon her knees upon the blankets of the sergeant, seized him in her firm embrace, and before he could recover from his surprise, and extricate himself, hugged him closely to her bosom, and bestowed upon his cheeks, a flood of kisses from a toothless mouth!

"Git out! Oh! thunder—Oh!—Hello! I say! What the splinters are you after! Whoo! D——!"

Thus, half suffocated for a moment, the sergeant vented his horror and surprise. He struggled fiercely, with his one arm, to push her away; but she had him at great advantage. He was in a sitting posture, swathed half in blankets; and, kneeling

beside him, the ghost had grappled him about the neck, and in the ardor of her kisses had almost succeeded in pressing him over upon the floor.

"My own chile!" she sobbed ever as she kissed.

"But I aint! Git out, I say! Lord, old woman, who the h–l kin you be, and what's you after! Child be d——d! Me a child!"

"My belubbed infant! I hab you in my arms agin, 'fore I dead! De Lawd be praise!"

"Infant, be ——!"

"Oh, my chile!"

"Child! you old fool! What's you thinking about!"

"Dat old Sappho should ebber lib for see dis day! I kin dead happy now; the Lawd be praise!"

"Dead! I wish you was, and the old d—l had you!"

"My chile—my bes' belubbed son!" and she blubbered aloud.

"D—n my splinters, old woman, ef I don't be the death of you for sartain. I'll knock you into the leetle eend of a sarcumstance ef you don't let go."

"It's you own ole Sappho, my chile! You no knew you own nuss; you own good ole woman, old Sappho, my son! Wha' you push me 'way for? I bin nuss you in dese arms a t'ousand times, and I lub you better dan all de worl'. Don't push me 'way!—I lub you too much for leff you; I wunt le' you go!"

"We'll see that! Lord! that I should live to be squeezed to death by a nigger, and suffickated in the arms of a raw-head and bloody bones like this! You old scout of satan, you—I'll——!"

The sergeant, swearing, and almost shouting in his rage, at length succeeded in extricating himself from the blankets; then, throwing off the loving intruder who had evidently mistaken her man, he managed to gain his feet, and to stand erect, with his one arm extended, the fist being now doubled until it wore the appearance of an awful maul, such as the rail splitter employs in driving home his wedges. The strange woman, singularly named after the tender-hearted wanton who flung herself away for love of the phlegmatic Phaon, had by this time arisen also; and, recoiling from the person she had so closely grappled but a moment before, she stood some five paces off, curiously regarding him, now satisfied of her error, and quite as much confounded as

he was worthy. It was at this moment, when the sergeant, fully persuaded that, if a ghost, the person before him was sufficiently substantial to feel the force of arguments such as it was in his power to deliver from his knuckles, was preparing to fall upon the intruder, tooth and nail, that the captain of partisans, aroused by the voices and the struggle, made his appearance in his night-clothes, but with a blanket over his shoulders, and interposed between the parties.

"Who's this, Millhouse? What's the matter?"

Before the sergeant could answer, the woman pushed beside him with a cry.

"Dis dah him! Dis dah my own chile!" and with sobs of joy she threw her arms about the neck of Porgy as she had done about that of Millhouse.

"Why, hello! my good woman! Who do you take me for? You are quite too free in your affections."

Porgy endeavored to extricate himself, but the effort was as difficult in his case as in that of Millhouse. Millhouse witnessed the effort, and chuckled outright.

"It's your turn now, cappin, and your right by nater!"

"My chile! my chile! You, me know you mudder nuss,—you own Sappho, wha' bin nuss' you when you bin leetle baby, only big like my han'."

"Sappho!" cried Porgy,—"what Sappho, is it you, my poor old mamma!—my good old woman!"

"Dah him! Dah me! my chile! my chile!"

"And a pretty sizeable sarcumstance of a child he is!" cried the sergeant, laughing at the spectacle.

"There, Sappho, my good old woman, that will do now," said Porgy—"come into my room and let us sit down where I can hear you."

"Da's it, my son! Oh! how I wants for tell you ebbry ting what's pass and gone;" and clinging to his arm the old woman accompanied the captain to his chamber.

"I'll bring you some lightwood, cappin," quoth the sergeant, "you'll be wanting to see, I reckon, the sawt of puson you're a-talking to."

The lightwood was brought, the fire soon put into a blaze, and seating himself on one corner of his blankets, the captain, with

some difficulty, persuaded the old woman to deposite herself on another. The sergeant with his blanket wrapped about his shoulders, took his stand beside the mantlepiece, his stump-arm resting upon it, while he looked curiously upon the group, and listened with interest to what was said. The spectacle was, indeed, a sufficiently curious one.

Pergy, as we already know, is somewhat of a spectacle himself, particularly with a toilet incomplete. But his companion, now, is one in admirable contrast with himself. She was very tall and thin—a mere skeleton, in fact—her garments loose and light, rather hanging about than fastened to her person. She was about seventy-five years old, or more. The successive wrinkles of her face, drooping together at last, hung about her cheeks and chin, like a once well filled, but long emptied purse. Her teeth were entirely gone; the lips, unusually thin, finding no resistance upon pressure, had sunk in, making a deep valley across the face, the nose on one hand and the chin on the other, both prominent and sharp, rising up like peaks of Teneriffe. The scant hairs which thinly covered her head, and escaped beneath the old handkerchief which wrapped it, were gray as the moss upon the old oak, and not much unlike it in texture and curl. But her eyes were as bright, shining out in the general blackness, as two fiery little stars, preparing for battle. They were small and deeply set, but as intense in their gaze as if the proprietor were fifteen only. Toothless wholly, the old woman was not tongueless. The tongue, indeed, seemed to find it necessary to do double duty in consequence of the deficiency of the teeth; and eager, yet mumbling the words the while, the ancient woman ran on, all the while, with little or no pause, ejaculating her thanks to heaven which had vouchsafed that she should see "her chile agin!"

"But you no know me, my chile. You bin fo'git old Sappho! Enty I know. You kaint tell me. Hah! das de way wid de world. You back tu'n, you gone, you in de ground, de berry chile you bin carry in you' arms, he fo'git all 'bout you!"

"But I didn't forget you, mauma! As soon as I saw you fairly, I knew you; and I only wonder I didn't know you by your voice."

"It's de teet', my chile! De teet' gone! De old snag drop

out,—de berry las' ob 'em drop out de beginning ob dis winter. *Nary* one [never a one] leff now for me chaw 'pon. Ah! de ole woman is a-gwine fas', my chile. It's de pretickler blessing ob de Lawd dat I leff for see you git back to you' own home and people. De Lawd be praise for all he mussies!"

"Well, mauma, I'm truly happy to see you once more alive It reminds me so much of everything—of my mother—of the old wagon—of the little bay ponies, and the rides we had together down to uncle Dick's. Why, how could you think, Sappho, that I should ever forget *you*?"

"It's de way ob de worl', my chile! an' I was afear'd dat when you git out in de worl' fair, an' see de people, an' git mix up wid de sodgers, you would shame for 'tink 'bout poor ole woman, da's a nigger, too."

"Never, Sappho! I have thought of you a thousand times, and I'm more glad to see you now, still living, and still able to see and to speak, than I should be at meeting with the best white friend I have. But, Sappho, you must tell me about everything. I want to know how you escaped in the general sack and confusion. When I sent Tom out here once to see how things went on, he could find nothing of you, and hear nothing. He only gathered that the British and tories had been here, had gutted the plantation and carried off all the people. You were believed to be dead, Sappho, and though not much given to weeping, I shed some tears for you, mauma. You may believe me, old woman, for I remembered you not only for yourself, but for others who were very precious to me."

"Enty I blieb's you, my chile. It do de ole woman hear good to blieb you. I knows you got a good heart, yourse'f, my chile, and dough, I knows, you lub much better to laugh dan to cry, I knows too you kin cry when dare's 'casion for it. But, yerry [hear ye] my chile. I gwine tell you all about wha' happen sence you bin gone."

And the old woman smoothed her garments in front, laid her hands crosswise on her lap, then beginning a regular swinging, or see-saw motion of the body, to and fro, proceeded with a long and somewhat tedious, but clear and intelligible account of plantation affairs up to the moment when the negroes were dispersed or carried off by the enemy. We will not afflict the reader with

this narration. But preserve only such portions of it as particularly arrested the attention of Sergeant Millhouse. As he stands somewhat in the relation of a third party, it is possible that what impressed his regards, will not be unworthy of the attention of other persons, the more particularly, indeed, as the matter was of some importance to the pecuniary affairs of Captain Porgy.

"Soon as I yerry, my chile, dat de red coats bin 'pon Gillon place, an' bin carry off de people, dat berry time I scare. Den I say to meself—wha' for hender 'em come yer, an' carry off we people too? Je's I bin tink dat ting, I begin gedder [gather] up for de swamp. Pot, kettle, pan; I tie 'em up in de blanket. I say to Cæsar—boy, clap 'em on you back; den I say to Cha'lot, my biggest da'ter;—he marry Cromanty Ben, my chile, you 'member—"

"Yes! yes!"

"Well, I say to him, pick up you tings. Do like you see me do. I tell de same ting to Betty, my second da'ter. He bin marry Eli, you 'member."

"Yes! yes!"

"He hab he four chillen [children] tree gal chile an' one boy; Cha'lot only hab two chillen; he loss two wid 'fection ob de bowels;—well, I say to Betty, pick up you chillen and tings, chile, we hab for hide, I see. An' I make him go right off to he husban' wha' bin a-work down in de big pine fiel', and tell 'em for drop he hoe, and pull foot dis way. My t'ird da'ter, Cinda [Lucinda], you 'member, I 'tir him up too and make 'em gedder up he chillen. He hab tree, but he husband dead dis two year. Den we tell Edisto Jenny, and scal' arm Sally, and leetle Jupe—de boy wha' hab de bow leg, you 'member, and he two sister—all ob 'em hab bow leg—we tell 'em wha's de trouble coming—an' we would ha' bin tell all our people, but, you see, day [they] was scatter, some in de cowpon fiel', some in de long tater [potato] fiel', wha' jine 'pon Miss Ebleigh; some one way, some tudder [t'other] an' dere's [there's] no time for loss, an' we kaint see dem. So we people start by our own se'f [selves], me, an' my tree da'ters, Cha'lot, and Betty, and Cinda, wid my gran' chillen, Liz and Mart'a, Cha'lot chile; an' Bob, an' Rachel, an' Clough, Betty chillen; an' Scip, an' Andra, an'

Harry, Cinda chillen; dem's all my ginerations wha' I bin carry in de swamp; but Cromanty Ben, Cha'lot' husban', an' Eli, Betty husban'—day gone wid us too, and four udder women, Edisto Jenny, an' scal' arm Sally, an' Sukey and Pussy, sisterun of Jupe—and Jupe hese'f—all ob dem wid de bow legs—all ob dem gone wid us—an' dem's all the ginerations ob de chillen ob Adam, my chile, dat git off wid us in de swamp, when we yerry de red coats is a-coming. An' we carry ebbry ting we kin lay hands 'pon, an' carry 'em safe an' easy—de pot an' de pan, an' de blanket, an' de cle'es, an' de axe, an' de hatchet, an' de knife—wha' ebber tings we kin pick up in de hurry, we carry dem off wid us clean. An', time for us do so, my chile, for when we peep out de swamp, de whole nigger quarter da bu'n, an' wha' ebber dem udder people bin leff dere, he bu'n to cinders an' ashes 'for you kin say t'ree prayer to de Lawd for all he mussies."

The sergeant had shown himself very restless during all this narration. He shifted his position from side to side of the mantlepiece; crossed over; now stood behind the captain; now beside the old woman, and, at moments, had his eyes and hand lifted up as if in meditation; or, as the fingers of his one hand were crooked and elevated successively, it might be in computation. When the old lady had reached what seemed a natural pause in her relation, the sergeant, as if unable to contain himself, cried out, over Porgy's shoulders—

"Why, old lady, you don't mean to say that you've got all these niggers in the swamp now?"

"De Lawd be praise, sah, day's all libbing [living], 'cept little Jupe, de bow-leg, wha' dead by break he neck; he fall from tree he bin climb one night for catch possum, and nebber kick arter he touch de 'arth."

"All living but leetle Jupe!" quoth the sergeant, lifting his surviving hand, and separately displaying the fingers sundry times before his own eyes, muttering all the while the tale to himself, with eager rapidity.

"Ef that's the case, ole woman, 'cording to my count, you've got in the swamp, not counting you, jest eighteen niggers. There's your da'ter Charlotte, and her two children—that's three—her husband makes four; Betty and her husband, and

four children, that's six, in all ten; then Cinda, her three children and her husband—"

"Cinda husbin' dead, sah!"

"Ah! yes! that's true; well, Cinda and her three children, making four, put to the other ten, is fourteen, by all counts; then there's two other women, that's sixteen, and two bow-legged gals, is eighteen! Eighteen niggers and most of 'em women! And you mean to say, old lady, that all these people are jest now in the swamp a-hiding?"

"As de Lord is mussiful to me, sah, day's all dere, 'cept Jupe, as I bin tell you, wha' bre'k he neck, by fall from de tree when he hunt possum!"

"Jimini! that's great intelligence, cappin. And how many of these is grown niggers, old lady—how many of 'em good to take up the hoe now, and—"

"No matter, sergeant," said Captain Porgy, who had been sitting silent, rather sad, indeed, listening to his ancient nurse,—"there are other more necessary questions—

"Sappho, have these people any clothing? Your own garments, mauma, are thin enough."

"Ah! my chile, we bin see berry hard times; de cloding [clothing] is moss in rag; an' we try for keep warm by de fire; an' we aint fed so well, my son; an' when Cromanty Ben come into de swamp last night an' say to me, 'Mammy, dere's a smoke coming out ob matussa house windows; I wonder who day in matussa house?'—'I say de Lawd be praise of my chile is come home to git his people clo'es and blanket.' Den day all 'gree dat I must come out and see; dey all 'fear'd for come, for fear de tories an' de red-coats grab 'em. Day knows dat day nebber gwine carry off poor wartless old woman like Sappho. So I come, maussa, an' dis de trute ob all my gineration's in de swamp."

"Jiminy! captain! But that makes the force quite expectable. We'll do. But we'll be a-wanting more hoes and axes; more supplies; you must make a bigger list, cappin; we must make a main fine crap this year, in spite of sarcumstances."

And the sergeant strode the room to and fro; his one hand waving at intervals; his fingers still crooking and extending in occasional computations; and his form rising up into unusual

erectness, while, though walking in his stockings only, he made the floor quiver with the solemnity of his tread. The old woman had more to say, and Porgy more to ask, but, the interruptions of the sergeant were too frequent to suffer other parties much liberty, and these interruptions were the more frequent and more impatient as Millhouse fancied that Porgy dealt in much very irrelevant matter. The latter, accordingly, put a very sudden close to all further talk that night, by saying:—

"Well, old lady, it's time now that we should sleep. We are very weary, and you, at your time of life, must not sit up too late. Let me give you something to make you strong. Sergeant, we must take a sup of Jamaica, with my old nurse."

"Won't I, cappin! She's a sensible old woman, and I like her. The way she dodged them tories and red-coats, and saved them niggers for us, is desarving of a drink. And I took you for a ghost, old lady, would you believe it, and ef you hadn't a-hugged and kissed so close, I'd mout be ha' b'lieved it to the very last."

"'Scuse me, sah; but I t'ought it was my own chile, all de time."

"Oh! you're 'scusable enough, under the sarcumstances. But let's have the drink all round."

The Jamaica was broached, and the cup which Porgy poured out he handed to the old woman.

"Drink that, Sappho, it'll help to strengthen your old limbs."

"T'ank you, my chile. The Lawd is good. God bress you for ebber, a t'ousand times, my son! may you nebber see trouble in de house ag'in!"

And she drank.

"Ha! it makes me feel warm to de heart. It's a good physic for ole people, my chile."

"And for young ones too, old lady," quoth Millhouse, emptying the cup at a swallow. Porgy drank, then giving Sappho a blanket, he conducted her into the shed room which had been assigned to Tom.

"Here, mauma, you will sleep to-night. To-morrow we'll see what's to be done for the people in the swamp. Lie down now, old lady, and take your sleep. Good night."

When the captain returned to the hall, the sergeant seized his arm—

"By the powers, cappin, luck's with us. We'll do. We have a force now that begins to tell—twenty-five niggers, and all, I reckon, able to hoe a task."

"Let us sleep now, sergeant!" said Porgy.

"Sleep! May I be squashed unconvartibly for ever, ef I shall be able to shut an eye to-night. I'll have to think over everything what's to be done with these other niggers."

"As you please, sergeant; but you will suffer me to sleep if you please." And Porgy disappeared. Millhouse threw himself down by the fire—

"Sich a man! he's got no more ambition than a dirt-eater with agy [ague] on him. He kaint even shake, he's so wanting in the proper sperrit!"

Let us drop the curtain for the present.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE SERGEANT IN A MAZE.—HE RETORTS UPON THE GHOST.

Sometime after midnight, Lance Frampton and his sooty companions returned from their nocturnal hunt. They had been tolerably successful, having bagged three possums and a coon. The dog had proved his merits, having had a severe fight with the coon, who was a well-grown monster, and gave in only after a long contest; yielding without a cry—to the great disappointment of Pompey, who was particularly anxious to extort this sort of acknowledgment from the victim. Frampton soon folded himself up for sleep in his blankets, not disturbing Millhouse, who slept soundly in spite of his own convictions to the contrary. He muttered and turned in his sleep, evidently dreaming earnestly; Frampton being able to distinguish a few broken sentences, in which the sergeant seemed to be still busy in a difficult but interesting arithmetic—

"Eighteen and seven—twenty-five;—seven women—no, nine—and—two—and the boys—and—boo!—boo!—boo!—"

The speech was swallowed in the snore. Our friend Tom, the cook, accompanied by Pomp, was somewhat surprised to find

his chamber partly occupied, and by a woman; but Sappho awakened at his entry—indeed, the old woman had scarcely slept—age never sleeps very soundly—and she made herself known to him in few words, and soon put him in possession of all the history as it is already known to us. This was done in low tones so as not to disturb the household. Pomp was soon as oblivious of the outer world as a stone, and Tom finally entreated the ancient lady to forbear all further revelations for the night.

"Kaise, you sees, aunt Sappho, dis 'ere boy, you humble sarbant, he's a-most brock down wid tire. Ef you bin know all wha' he bin do to-day, and dis 'ere coon hunt to-night, you gwine say youse'f, de chile better hab he sleeps. I glad for see you, aunt Sappho, berry much glad for see you; kaise you bin ole fellow sarbant wid me, and I bin yer you bin dead. But you aint dead, I see, and I hopes berry much you aint gwine for dead, long time, and so, aunt Sappho, as I bin said—a-ye-ho-he-yo he-me, ya-ya-ya!" (yawning with open jaws, wide as those of the great cave of Kentucky); "I must hab some sleeps now! and de Lord bress you, aunt Sappho—an' I'll tank you to shet up now!"

"Tek' you sleeps, my son; I sees you wants 'em. I terra [tell-a] you shbry t'ing nudder time. You kin sleep now. I done!"

"Da's a good aunty! nudder time will do!" And Tom soon followed the example of Pompey, and save for an occasional growl from Frampton's dog, and a more regular succession of noises, scarcely so pleasant, from sundry nasal eminences growing upright in several parts of the household, all would have been entirely quiet. There was no further disturbance during the night.

Bright and early, Sergeant Millhouse was afoot. His dreaming and waking thoughts had greatly contributed to his power and importance. He scarcely gave himself time to get his clothes on, before he presented himself at the entrance of the little shed room to which Sappho had been consigned.

"Hello! old lady—Sapphy, in there—come out, and let's have a good look at you by daylight."

There was no answer. He repeated the summons. It was

"Impossible, sergeant."

"And she warnt in your room last night?"

"Not that I know of."

"Lord help me, ef I shan't go crazy! And I warnt in your room last night?"

"It may be that you were. You know best. If you were, it was while I slept."

"Slept! By the powers, cappin, you was wide-awake as a black fish; and when the talk was over, we all kim out, and swallowed a little Jamaiky by way of medicine. And we gin the old nigger a cup for the good news she brought, and then you gin her a blanket, and you shewed her yourself whar to sleep in Tom's room, and thar we left her."

"This is a strange delusion of yours, sergeant. But—! she's go to the room and find her there, if you say yo—child, I'm a- there to sleep?"

—petticoats, by reason that

"Lord save me, but you put h—"

"Thev—"

And with a glorious chuckle at his own wit, the sergeant ascended to the captain's chamber and broke in without ceremony. Porgy was already up and at the window shaving. He had been up for some time, had heard the sergeant's inquiries below, and knowing thoroughly the sort of person with whom he dealt, could very well understand the motive of his anxiety. Porgy had seen old Sappho already that morning, and spoken with her at the window. The old woman, with her blanket around her by way of a cloak, was already moving off to join, and make her report to her "ginerations" in the swamp. She had but few words with her foster child—for such Porgy had been—and they were such as the reader can readily conceive from what has been shewn already. As the sergeant thundered up the steps and entered the piazza, our captain of partisans readily conjectured that the next visit of Millhouse would be to himself. He prepared to disquiet him.

"Hello! cappin; would you think it, that old skillyton of a woman's off a'ready?"

"What woman do you mean, Millhouse?"

"What woman! Why old Sapphy, to be sure, that I tuk for a ghost—that come in upon me last night, and gin me such a huggin', and a-kissin', and all on your account."

"I really don't know what you're talking about, sergeant."

"Don't know what I'm a-talking about!" quoth Millhouse, in amazement—"Don't know, cappin! Why, Lord love you, the old woman, your nuss, that calls you her child, that hugged and kissed both of us till we was a-most choked and smothered—the one that's got the niggers in the swamp, seven ginerations and more, making in all eighteen good hoe hands. Lord save us, how kin you forgit sich a matter!"

"Forget! How should I remember a matter which I never heard of before. You're certainly dreaming, sergeant."

"Dreaming, cappin! Ef I thought so, I'd be mighty apt to bust my brains out agin the fireplace; but you're a-joking only. Sartainly, you kaint forgit the skin-dried old skillyton of a woman that slept in here last night; and we kim [came] into your room, both on us; and you was a-setting thar, jest on the edge of the b'anket, and she was setting thar jest on t'other edge; and I stood up thar jest agin the fireplace; and how she told us of her gitting away from the red-coats and the tories; she and her three da'ters—I 'member all their names perfectly; there was Charlotte, and Betty, and Cinda—I kaint forget—and Charlotte had two children, and Betty four, and Cinda three, and two on 'em had husbands living, though I kaint be sartain which, all on 'em in the swamp, and there were two bow-legged gals, and there was a bow-legged boy, and his name was Jupe—and, you kaint forgit that! Jupe fell from a tree, climbing a'ter coon, and jest broke his neck outright; and there was other niggers, making eighteen in all, not counting old skillyton Sapphy herself; I counted 'em all up last night, and ranged 'em off for working, soon as they come in, so far as I could, not having seed any on 'em. You must 'member all that matter, cappin."

"Not a syllable! It's all news to me, sergeant!" And Porgy gazed on him with a well-affected amazement of stare that provoked the most natural consternation in the world in the features of the other.

"The d—l you say! But, Lord, cappin, you kaint be forgitting your own ole nuss, Sapphy."

"I never to my knowledge, Millhouse, had a nurse with such a name, which seems to be that of a heathen goddess."

"Heathen h—ll! cappin; she set thar, I tell you."

"Impossible, sergeant."

"And she warnt in your room last night?"

"Not that I know of."

"Lord help me, ef I shan't go crazy! And I warnt in your room last night?"

"It may be that you were. You know best. If you were, it was while I slept."

"Slept! By the powers, cappin, you was wide-awake as a black fish; and when the talk was over, we all kim out, and swallowed a little Jamaiky by way of medicine. And we gin the old nigger a cup for the good news she brought, and then you gin her a blanket, and you showed her yourself whar to sleep in Tom's room, and thar we left her."

"This is a strange delusion of yours, sergeant. But why not go to the room and find her there, if you say you saw her go there to sleep?"

"Lord save me, but you put her thar yourself."

"There you are mistaken! But, if such is your notion, go and seek her there."

"I've been thar, and she's not thar!" cried the sergeant, in a state of approaching perspiration.

"I thought so!" muttered the captain of partisans, in subdued tones, but sufficiently loud to be heard, and he touched his head significantly—

"Millhouse, your suppers are too heavy. I would counsel you against much meat at night. A single bit of that broiled ham—the slices thin—is quite enough for any decent white man. And in eating your hoe-cake, take my counsel to reject the softer parts; confine yourself entirely to the crisp portions, the crust. Besides, coffee is a wonderful stimulant of the brain. Don't go over a pint hereafter at night; and, perhaps, it will be well to deny yourself the freedom of the Jamaica after a certain hour. Say, a single glass after smoking your last pipe, and then to sleep. Believe me, my good fellow, by observing these simple forbearances, you will escape the visitation of the nightmare. She has evidently given you a fearful hug last night."

"'Twas the old skillyton nigger, I tell you—'twas Sapphy, your nuss, and not any nightmar'. Lord, cappin, ef you wouldn't drive me 'stracted, don't you go on so. Warnt that old nigger

here, that nuss of yourn, as skinny as a dry peach-skin — all skin and bone — warnt she setting thar for a good hour, a-telling us of her da'ters in the swamp, and their children, and their husbands, and of the boy Jupe, that broke his neck a'ter the coon, and them two bow-legged gals, his sisters. Now, jest be sensible, cappin, and tell all about it, as I seed and heard it my own self."

"I can tell you nothing more, sergeant. You've certainly had a very lively dream last night, which I should greatly like to see realized."

"A dream! Lord! Lord! I shill go crazy and outright *re*stracted! And you hadn't a nuss named Sapphy?"

"Never!"

"Oh! Lord, what shall I be thinking!"

"Don't eat so much at night again, sergeant."

"It *kaint* be a dream!—"

"Leave off the coffee in particular!"

"I swow! it warnt no dream!"

"One drink only of Jamaica, after your last pipe."

"Ef 'twas a dream it was as much like the *rual* and living life as I ever seed it."

"That's always the case with pleasant dreams, sergeant; but they always lead to disappointment. What a glorious crop you could make if your dream of those eighteen negroes were true?"

"Lord, yes! and I had jest set my heart on beating Fordham out of sight. But O! stairs, cappin, it ought to be true and it must be true."

Just then Tom was heard below, calling to Pomp.

"Thar's Tom! He must ha' seed her ef she was thar. I'll ax him."

"Do so," says Porgy, "and satisfy yourself. It will do you some good and make you less certain of your dreams hereafter."

Millhouse sallied out, and Porgy darting to the window, caught the eye of Tom, ascending the stairs to the piazza, and motioned with his hands to him. At that moment Millhouse from the hall cried out to him—

"Look you, Tom, where's the old nigger-woman what slept in your room last night?"

Porgy shook his head negatively to the cook. Tom was quick

to conceive, and knew thoroughly the habits of the captain of partisans, as a practical joker. He immediately conjectured what was required of him, and his answer was as prompt as if dictated by the very mother of the truth.

"Wha' womans you talk 'bout, mass Millh'us? I aint see *nary* old nor young woman 'pon dis place!"

"The h–ll you aint! The Lord be marciful to my poor senses."

"Somet'ing seem for trouble you, mass Millh'us; may be you is berry much hungry for you breakus."

"D—n the breakfust! Oh! thar's Pomp! I recken he must ha' seed the old woman."

Pomp was beginning to ascend the steps leading to the back piazza, at the head of which Tom stood. Tom replied for Pomp, in tones loud enough for the other to hear.

"Wha', Pomp! How kin he see ole woman in my room, ef me, Tom, no bin see 'em? Heh! Pomp? Speak, boy,—you *no* bin see no ole woman in de room whay we sleeps las' night?"

Tom's tone, and the fierce scowl which he put on while speaking to the boy, effectually taught the latter what sort of answer was required from him, and he responded without hesitation—

"Nebber see ole woman in de room, uncle Tom."

"Da's wha' I say, mass Millh'us. You muss ha' bin dream 'bout dat old woman."

"Dream! Lord! Lord! and here am I a loser of eighteen niggers, fus' rate fiel' hands, and nobody seems to care about it. Lord ha' marcy upon you, cappin!" returning, as he spoke, to Porgy's room—"but you don't seem as ef you had any feeling for your own losses. Now, I 'member—ef 'twas a dream I had of that skillyton nigger wench,—I thought it mighty strange you show'd so little consarn when I told you about putting the eighteen niggers to work, and what they'd hev' to do. I thought it mighty onnatural, of you last night; but I feel its mighty onnatural, now, as it looks to me this morning. Eighteen able bodied niggers gone, as I may say, in the snapping of a finger. I does feel so mean. Tom, old fellow, do let's have breakfus' mighty soon. We are gwine to see Mrs. Eb'leigh to-day, and must fix up for it. Lord! Lord! ef I could only ha' told her 'bout them eighteen niggers out of the swamp, added on to the

poor seven we've got now! How could I ha' dreamed a thing so nateral, and seed the old woman so cl'ar in the firelight, and felt her a-hugging me, and a-kissing me, with her nose and chin poking into my face all the time. 'Twarn't no dream, I swow, cappin—'twarn't no dream. 'Twas too nateral for a dream! I kaint help but b'lieve it all, try the best I kin!"

At that moment, a strange voice was heard without. Millhouse started and prick'd up his ears. In the next moment, Porgy saw him dart forward, with a shriek of delight. The captain of partisans looked out of the window upon the piazza, and there the spectacle of the night was reversed. It was old Sappho, who was, this time, nearly suffocated in the embrace of the sergeant!

CHAPTER XLVI.

NEAR APPROACHES TO SANS-CULOTTISM.

"God bless you, my beautyful old nigger. I'll love you tell my heart drops out of my body for this visit. You're jest as beautiful now, to my eyes, as ef you'd dropt out of heaven, and brought all the bright stairs along with you. But, Lord, old woman, what a scare you've given me. I thought you had ruined me for ever. To lose eighteen niggers, without a minute's warning, aint so easy to be stood, I tells you; and I begun mightily to feel as ef you had done me that same dissarvice; made me a rich man first, only to make me poorer than ga' broth arterwards! Lord! with what an eternal honest face, the cappin kin lie; and lie so bodily;—lying through the whole melon, and never choking at the rine [rind]. But I forgive him! The Lord be praised! old lady, I must give you another hug. I'm so spontinaciously happy."

"Tank 'e, maussa," answered old Sappho, quietly, and without any struggling to extricate herself—"but I tinks you wasn't so glad to hug de ole woman las' night!"

"Thar' you hev' me, old lady. That was kaise I didn't know you then. 'Member, you kim in like a sperrit, and you tuk me,

by supprise a leetle. 'Twas onawares you tuk me. I warnt scared, but I felt as ef I didn't know you, and to be squeesed up lovingly by a body one dont know, and pretty much in the dark as we was, is mighty apt to make a pusson feel jubous and onsartin what to say or do. But now that I knows you, and what you come for, I'm your well-wisher, and friend, and off'cer, and I takes you continentally, as I may say, into the ranks."

"Are you still dreaming, sergeant?" cried Porgy, emerging from his chamber, and coming out into the piazza.

"You're jest about the fattest sinner living, cappin, and can jest now lie as easy as ef a conscience warn't no sort of trouble to you at all. En, how did you put up that black faced satan, Tom, there, and Pomp, to back your lying for you? Lord! how unateral they did it. As sure as a gun you'll all go to the devil together, and not one soul of you miss the road."

"When that time comes, sergeant, you will be found leading the forlorn hope!—Well, Sappho, my good old woman, you are as sprightly as a girl of sixteen. You've done more work than all of us together. And these are my poor people. Charlotte, and Betty, and Cinda, I remember; and Ben—"

"An' Eli, maussa; you 'member Eli, enty?"

was the interruption of Betty's husband who now ascended the steps, leading the way for the group, and grappled the captain by the hand. His example was followed by all the rest; and numberless and sufficiently various were the exclamations of rejoicing on every hand.

"De Lord be praise, maussa, you come home at las'!" "Tanks be to de Fader!" "Oh! I so happy, aunty!" and—"Maumy, maussa come! Enty you glad?" "Glad for cry, my chile."

But we need not multiply the phrases. The character of the catalogue may be sufficiently conjectured from these samples But he who knows what a Carolina plantation is—one of the old school—one of an ancient settlement—where father and son, for successive generations, have grown up, indissolubly mingled with the proprietor and his children for a hundred years, may follow out the progress, and repaint the picture for himself. Porgy had few words, but his sympathies were more clearly expressed, to the eyes of all the slaves, than if he had spoken them in the best chosen language. As the several groups passed up

the steps, and gave way for each other, the men with their wives and their children, the calculating sergeant could not contain his joy. Now he strode up and down the piazza, counting with the fingers of his solitary hand. Anon, he paused to take with an affectionate grasp, some one girl or boy by the shoulder, according as the development showed a desirable strength.

"Eighteen, by the powers, and every one of them a fuss rate for the field. Dream, indeed! Did I dream! Lord, how some people will lie. Cappin, I'll never forgive you that trick. I b'lieve its made some of my hairs turn gray."

Porgy, meanwhile, gave the negroes a brief talk. He should soon visit the city and find them in clothes and blankets, hats and shoes. In truth, these were all greatly needed. Nothing but the abundant stores of lightwood, which the country afforded, could possibly have kept the poor wretches from freezing, even in a Carolina winter. Affectionately welcomed, and assured of proper provisions, they were all dismissed to the basement rooms for the present, except old Sappho, for whom the captain was resolved to provide elsewhere.

"And now," said he, "here is Pomp signalling us for breakfast. I trust, Millhouse, that your dreams have not spoiled your appetite."

"No thanks to you, that it haint. Ef the dream hadn't ha' come true, I'd ha' hardly eaten to-day. But ef I don't eat now, it's only bekaise I'm still busy a-dreaming.

Breakfast was soon despatched, when Sappho was called in to take her portion from the table. This duty over, another of much more embarrassing character was to be attended to — the examination of the several wardrobes of our partisans, in order to a proper exhibition at the dinner party of the widow Eveleigh.

The entire stock of clothing possessed by Captain Porgy (that portion excepted which he wore in common) was carried in a rude deerskin portmanteau or valise, of camp manufacture, — the workmanship of a common soldier. Beyond a single dress-suit, that is for dress parade, our partisan had but very little to boast. There may have been a change of small-clothes, — two pair, in brief, one of buff and one of blue, — that which he wore belonging to neither color. It might have been blue once, possible gray, but time, and sun, and rain, and wind, and frequent

intercourse with the soil, had left the original ground-work very questionable, and, to be safe, we will call it neutral. When the portmanteau, which had never known the safe virtues of a lock, was unstrapped, and the contents displayed, uppermost appeared the two articles already mentioned. The blue small clothes were first examined. As at first opened, they suggested the idea of an enormous sack, such as might now serve to take in a bale of long cottons. Capacious as they seemed, however, the experience of the captain had determined that they were by no means sufficiently ample to afford him the degree of freedom which he required when dining out. To the eye, the blues were the least questionable of his small-clothes, in consequence of the fact that they had been, on several occasions,—as they seemed to need it—redipped in a decoction of the native indigo. But even these wore a suspicious whiteness in certain spots, which, unless he wore his hunting frock, by which they were covered. were apt to obtrude themselves rather boldly upon the sight of the spectators. Though faded, here and there, however, the blues were intact—there were no awkward rents or patches; and no places so much worn as to keep the wearer in constant apprehension of an explosion. Porgy, with the help of Tom and Pomp, subjected them to a severe scrutiny, and they were then laid aside for a moment.

"They're the best," quoth Porgy, musingly, "if they were not so atrociously contracted about the hips and waist. I'm always in dread lest I should burst them."

"Day strong, maussa."

"Yes, Tom! But not strong enough for everything. and the widow will, no doubt, give us a first-rate dinner, and I am in honor bound to do justice to it. There will be wines, too, and I must drink,—I *will* drink. and try every variety that's offered. By Bacchus! the very idea of wine inspires me. It's long since I've smacked my lips upon the tears of the vineyard. Lift up the buffs, Pomp."

The garment thus described dangled in the air from the extending finger of Pompey.

"They would do well, in respect to size; but these d—d patches, Tom."

"Day mighty broad in de face, maussa."

"As the full moon, Tom, though less bright of complexion."

"Ef you puts on dese, maussa, you hab for wear de shirt [hunting]. De pigeon-tail nebber guine to cubber [cover] 'em."

The hurts of the garment were chiefly in the rear. Porgy always seated himself with emphasis. Sometimes, indeed, he came to the ground, though letting himself down never so easily, with something of a shock. The results always told fearfully on his small-clothes. The buffs had particularly suffered, and in this special region. The consequence was that it had become necessary, on more than one occasion, to "put a plaister on them,"— using Millhouse's descriptive phraseology. Now, this plaister or patch, or pair of patches—for Porgy wore his clothes with some uniformity—at least in wearing them *out*,—were, for two sufficient reasons, supplied with buckskin, dressed in camp, and with sufficient rudeness. Nothing but buckskin, it was thought, could possibly endure the constant strain and pressure in the siling region. But, besides this, the buff was not to be found in camp. The art which was available in that region, was not of a sort to make the boundary line of patch assimilate naturally with the original continent of cloth; and though, from use, the buff and buckskin had gradually grown to look alike, as loving wife and husband are said to do after certain seasons,—yet it needed no critical eye to discover that there were ridges, rising almost into promontories, by which the lines of union, or demarcation, were at once distinguished. A frequent renewal of the stitch had increased the deformity, and upon present inspection it was found that the craft of the tailor was even now necessary to reünite the parts, and renew the integrity of the bonds that held them together.

"He tear out yer, maussa."

"Torn!" with some horror.

"Yes, he breck out, and der's leetle hole working yer, in de middle ob the ledder [leather]. Lor, a mighty, massa, you's too hard 'pon you breeches! 'Taint decent and like gemplemans, de way you wear you clo'es."

"Get out, you rascal, and get ready to sew them up at once. Get your needle and thread; or see Sapphe, and see if some of these young grand-daughters of hers can't do the work less clumsily. I reckon she's taught some of them to sew."

The girl was found, and squat upon the floor, provided with all Tom's stock in trade as a tailor, she was soon busy with the garment.

"Ef you wears the buffs, maussa, you hab for wear de shirt."

"Yes! yet the dress coat is more in style," said Porgy, with something of a sigh, lifting both coats up at the same moment, and holding them apart for survey, in separate hands. The hunting-shirt was a blue homespun; the dress-coat was a faint approach to the proper army-uniform of a captain in those days. It was of broadcloth, originally red, but thrice dyed in blue. The latter color, however, had somewhat faded, and the red, or a most unnatural phase of it, was about to reappear through the subsequent dye.

"Ef we had some indigo to gee dat coat a dip now," quoth Tom, himself rather preferring the garment on account of its texture and brighter buttons.

"Still I couldn't wear it with the buffs. No! no! I must wear the shirt. It helps to cover the territory requiring to be concealed, and to hide these wornout acres."

"He's acre for true," growled Tom, looking at the patches which the negro girl was repairing. "He big like de skairt ob saddle."

"They must do, nevertheless," muttered Porgy, with a doleful visage. "Examine the coat, Tom, the hunting shirt, and see if it's sound."

"Hab breck under the arm, maussa."

"Throw it to Pussy, and let her sew it up. Now, Pomp, unroll me that homespun bundle. We must see for shirts and stockings."

"Ha! Shirt and stockin'. I 'speek dem guine gee you trouble 'nuff for fin'."

Pomp unrolled the bundle. The stockings appeared—well saved—the dress pair,—used by the captain only on state occasions—of thick white cotton. They had been a present from the widow Griffin.

"He all gone at de heel and toes, maussa."

"Fortunately those parts are buried in the shoes. What of the shirt, Pomp?"

Pomp proceeded to unfold it. There was but one.

"Tenderly, you rascal; do you think you're handling a side of leather. Are your hands clean, you monkey. Look at the fellow, Tom; take it from him. He will have it in rags without a warning."

"Ha! maussa, only le' um 'lone, he tumble into rags hese'f."

"But we musn't let it alone, you rascal, and we must be careful that it does not tumble into rags until this day's business is over. It was once the best of Irish linen. It is the last of six dozen. Six dozen! Heavens! was I indeed the owner of six dozen shirts at one time!"

"Ha! ef that was the only 'stravagance and foolishness, maussa. You le' de sergeant know you bin once hab six dozen shu't, all de same time, he gee you h–ll ob a sarmon 'bout you 'stravagance! But, de Lord sabe us, maussa, de shu't aint all yer [here]! All de skairt ob de back is gone." And Tom displayed the ill-conditioned garment outright.

"The skirt gone! How! Where?—True, by Jupiter. That infernal savage. It was Indian Bet that washed it last. The catamount. She has torn it out and carried off the fragment. Look in the portmanteau for the piece!"

"Ingin Bet nebber bin carried 'em off in dis worl'. Wha, he carry 'em for? He too rotten. Ingin Bet good hand for tief, but he nebber guine tief rotten shu't. Look, Pomp, I 'speck he must be in de bottom day [there]!"

The search was vain. And Porgy stood aghast at the spectacle.

"What's to be done, Tom!"

"Is de buzzum good in de front?"

"Yes."

"Well! easy 'nuff. De coat cubber de back, you know. See yer! yer's de hole for put you head t'rough. When you guine dress, I 'tan behin' you and slip de shu't ober, and when you hab 'em on, I get t'read [thread] and make Pussy 'titch [stitch] two t'ree, sebben, five 'titch cross de back for hold de two side togedder. Da's de way for do 'em; I see. I guine fix em."

A white vest was found in the valise; a leather stock, a pair of yellow buckskin gloves; and, after a fashion, Porgy succeeded in displaying, ready for use, the entire habit which he was to wear that day. This done, he proceeded, with the help of Tom and Pomp, to put himself in harness.

Talk of the iron garments of ancient chivalry! Never did the closing of rivets on the part of the knights of the English Harrys and Edwards, on the eve of battle, require more time and painstaking, or cause more anxiety to pages and squires, and armor-bearers and armorers, then did the costuming of their master, that day, occasion to his two sable attendants. Such gingerly handling of coat, and vest, and shirt, and small-clothes, was, perhaps, scarcely ever beheld before. The adjustment of the captain's linen, was especially a subject of some solicitude. While he sat upon a keg, Tom, standing on one side, and Pomp on the other, the former quietly dropped the garment, shorn of its fair proportions, over his neck.

While Porgy buttoned it at the throat, and slipped his arms into the sleeves, the two attendants seized the skirts at a signal, and drawing the sundered sides as nearly together as they dared, Pussy, the girl, with a dozen successive stitches, united the reluctant skirts, but not so as to cover a large waste of territory between, which, until Porgy could get his vest and coat on, remained as bare in back as a Pict in full armor. Porgy sat erect during the operation, never daring even to move, until Tom gave him permission by telling him—

"You kin feel yourse'f a leetle now, maussa; but tek keer how you ben' you back, and 'tretch out you' arm, 'tell you 'git on you coat and weckset. Dis here shu't nebber guine tan' pull and jerk, mek' 'em easy as you kin."

"*Feel* myself *a little*, indeed! I certainly should like to feel myself less?—Hand me those shoes, Pomp!"

"Ha! Hello! Boy!—Wha' dis? You never bin brush you maussa shoes ebber sence he bin trabble in all dat mud wid 'em?"

"I no see any brush, uncle Tom!"

"Ha! you no see any brush, you bull eye nigger! I tek' hole' ob you, I show you brush on de back wid sights ob hick'ry. Git out, and fin' piece ob clot', and see you rub off de mud from dem boot' fore I kin crook my elbow. Clot' is brush, you warmint, ef you use 'em so."

Pomp was off, and Porgy resigned himself patiently on the keg, which sufficed him for a chair, until his inexperienced "*valley de sham*" could re-appear. Meanwhile, Tom handed him his hunting-shirt.

"Look you, maussa," said the cook, as he helped his master on with the coat—"You hab for walk 'traight in dis coat. He aint so 'trong arter all. You mus' tek' care and no t'row youse'f 'bout when you at Miss Ebleigh's. Ef you forgit, sometime, and t'row out you arm too wide, you'll breck somewhere, I know; in de sleeb, or under de arm, or mout be in de back; an' ef once he begin for go, dere's no stopping 'em. You'll breck all side, I tell you, and de breeches will be for busting out too; and dat won't do no how, when you da 'stan' [stand] 'fore de ladies. Min' wha' I tell you, maussa, and walk 'traight track. Be berry preticklar, jis' when you's gitting off de hoss; and when you's a-walking up de steps, don't you 'tretch out for hol' de bannister; and when you's a-talking big wid de lady, you mustn't tink for raise up you arm to de heabens, as ef you was a-cailing de sun, and de moon to be witness for wha' you say. 'Twon't do:—you'll be breck out ebbry side ef you guine try for do all dem mighty t'ings. Set down easy in de chair, and don't you go for 'traddle you legs too wide. I no 'pen' [depend] 'pon dese breeches 't all."

"It's come to a pretty pass, indeed, when such a sooty scamp as you are, Tom, undertakes to teach me how to carry myself in a lady's presence."

"Enty I know?"

"So, you think I had better not lift my leg unadvisedly so—"

"Top, maussa; you sure for bu'st dem breeches."

"Or throw out my arms, right or left,—so!"

"Lawd! maussa, don't you now! De coat is ready for pop ebbry way."

"I feel it, Tom! I shall be cautious for my own sake, not less than for decency's. But, be off; send Pomp to me with the shoes, old fellow, and see what you can do toward fixing up the lieutenant and the sergeant. They'll need quite as much help as myself, I fancy, in preparing themselves for this visit."

Tom disappeared. The shoes were soon brought by Pomp, and drawn on with a degree of care and deliberation which showed that our captain of partisans was as duly sensible as Tom of the danger which might follow any extraordinary efforts of muscle on his part. He felt himself, at length, completed for his visit, all but cap and sword. The sword, however absurd it might

seem, was still an essential in his present habit, which was wholly military. It was still justified, in use, by the unsettled condition of the country, and we must not be surprised to see him, on his departure for the city, not only wearing his sabre, but carrying his holsters and pistols; and this, chiefly, with due regard to propriety of costume. But we must not anticipate. To buckle on his sabre, and don his well-worn coonskin cap, was the work of a moment. The horses had been already saddled, and were in waiting in the court below. The voice of Millhouse was heard calling, and the heavy tread of himself and Frampton were echoing loudly in the hall. They were evidently ready, and Porgy joined them.

"Let's look at you, cappin," quoth Millhouse, "and see how you're a-looking." And he walked round his superior, scrutinizing him at every point.

"Your sk*a*irt's *re*ther short," quoth he.

"Do you see the blisters—the leather patches—sergeant?" demanded Porgy, quickly.

"N—o!" answered the sergeant slowly, peering about curiously the while; "but as you love your life, cappin, you mustn't bend for'ad the leetlest, for you aint got any *skairts* to spare. Your gairth is so mighty big that it draws up the gairments monstrous high."

"To horse!" cried Porgy, with something very emphatic in his tones, leading the way.

"Stop a bit!" said the sergeant, "while I take in another hole in your belt. It'll better your figger a leetle; though 'taint easy to help it much."

"D—n the figure!" exclaimed the indignant captain, breaking away, without suffering the intended service.

"Look you, cappin, ef you splurges about in that sort of style you'll resk mightily the security of all your fixins."

We shall say nothing about the costume of the captain's subordinates. Enough that they partook of the deficiencies, and provoked the same sort of embarrassments, which we have seen troubling their superior. They had done their best to prepare for the eyes of the lady, and they, at least, had no misgivings as troubled with no expectations. A word to Tom, and another word to old Sappho, who could not sufficiently admire the wonder-

ful dimensions, the great sword, and the fearful looking pistols of her child, and the three cantered off at a free pace, in the direction of the widow Eveleigh's. When approaching the avenue, the sergeant suddenly drew up, and entreated the attention of the captain for a moment.

"Cappin," says he, "now's the time. Head's up! Off'cers to the front. Cappin! It all *im*pends upon you now! One thing I've got to say: a widow aint like a young gal. She's *got* ixperence. 'Taint any needcessity, when you 'tacks a widow, to be guine all about it, and about it. They don't aix that of you. They onderstands. 'Taint any use to ride round to the gate; jest pull down the fence and ride in. What did I say to you afore? A widow's jest like a fort that's used to surronderin'. It's only to summon it and say here we are to make a breach, or run over the walls. Jest show yourself ready to scale and storm, and what does the commander of the garrison say? Why, says he—let's make good *tai*rms and that's all we're axing—and that's what the widow'll say; but I wouldn't make the *tai*rms too easy, cappin. You're needing a mighty deal of assistance. Hold her to it. Give her no chaince, and when she finds you ready to seize, she'll give in. She kain't help herself. Only, don't you be mealy-mouthed, cappin! Go it, like a charge!"

Porgy surveyed the speaker for a moment in the most perfect silence. Then quietly, with a smile, he said, clapping spurs to his horse—

"Millhouse, you were surely born to be a general!"

In another moment the party was pacing up the noble avenue of ancient oaks conducting to the mansion of the wealthy widow.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE SERGEANT PUTS THE CAPTAIN FAVORABLY FORWARD.

THE plantation of Mrs. Eveleigh was one of the finest and best kept along the Ashepoo. The widow had been fortunate in the circumstances which secured her equally against the hostility of both parties during the late war. She had friends at court, no matter who was sovereign for the season. Her husband had been a popular officer in his British majesty's army, and, when not on service, had been a favorite among his neighbors. The widow shared his popularity, possessing, in eminent degree, those qualities of character by which he had secured it. Her estate, accordingly, had escaped that harrying process, by which so many of those around her had been devastated; and the excellence of the land, the skill, sobriety and integrity of her overseer; good seasons, profitable staple (rice) and her own judicious economy, had resulted in a constant increase, by which she had become one of the wealthiest persons of this region of country. She lived, during the greater portion of the year, upon her estate, and this had been an additional secret of her prosperity. Her presence had served, not only to promote the success but the charm and beauty of her plantation. Her fields were well distributed, always kept clean and under good fences; the grounds were well laid out; the undergrowth kept down; the woods trimmed up; the groves, whether of oak or other forest-trees, such as wooed the wandering footstep, and appealed sweetly to the musing fancies. Long shadowy avenues, on three sides, conducted to her dwelling which stood among sheltering clumps of a growth extending far beyond all human memory; while the house itself, of ample dimensions, and built in a style at once tasteful and simple, was furnished with all the attractions which, in that day, distinguished the mansions of American refinement.

The morning was a mild and bright one. As Captain Porgy and his two companions cantered up the avenue, Mrs. Eveleigh might be seen, with her son, sitting in the open piazza

"They're on the look out for us, cappin," said the sergeant, with an air of triumph. "She's mighty airnest to see you, I tell you. Now, cappin, 'member what I've said. Now's the time. All the signs is favorable. Don't you let the chaince slip through your fingers. No man gits a widow by being bashful about it. It's the bold heart, a'ter all, that gits the good things of this life. When the fruit's ripe it's only to shake the tree. You needn't climb, but jest take hold, like a man, with a detarmination like, never to let go, 'till your eend's answered. That's all. Now go ahead."

With the air of a man who has given the last words of counsel to a young beginner, when sending him forward to the fight, our sergeant waved his one hand, and suffered his superior to ride ahead. Porgy answered only with a faint smile. He seemed uneasy, if not chafed at the pertinacious conceit of his follower; while Lance Frampton, when Millhouse had fallen back and joined him, took occasion to school the veteran in unexpected style, and with some warmth.

"Look you, sergeant, 'twont do for you to be talking to the captain as if he was a boy, and you was his teacher. You'd better be quiet now before you make him angry. He knows you're his friend, and that makes him stand a good deal from you; but what can you teach him about fine people, and high life, and the sort of behavior he's to behave when he's in company with rich ladies in their own houses. He knows more of such people than you and I ever saw, and don't want any education how to do when he gets among 'em. You'd better shut up now in all these matters. I see he don't like it, and you'll some day go one step too far, and you'll rouse him."

Millhouse glared upon the lieutenant with mixed looks of surprise and indignation. When he recovered himself, he said:—

"And don't I know what's good for him, and don't I see what's needful to save him from the cussed sheriff. He must marry this rich widow, I tell you; that's his only chaince."

'Well, he won't, I'm thinking."

"Why won't he! She's eager enough, I see, to ax him hersolf."

"I don't believe a word of it; I don't believe she'll have him,

and you're just doing wrong now, to put such ideas into his head."

"She won't!—Lord, Lance? as ef you had any ixperence to know. Why, look what she's done for him a'ready; and look at her axing you and me to come and spend the day and take dinner. Don't you know, as well as me, that these people never yet axed people of our sort into their houses, or let 'em set at their table. It's only bekaise we're friends of the cappin that she axes us."

"It's because we helped to save her son's life and her own. It's because she's grateful; and if you're right-minded, you'll just be quiet all to-day while in her house, and be respectful, and listen only, and answer when you're spoken to, and just say as little as you can in civility; for we ain't asked to be heard; it's only because she wants to be grateful. Now, I must say, sergeant, you've too great an ambition to be a-talking. The less you talk, the better; for though you're a sensible man enough, in actual service, yet you're not the person to speak the sort of things that the great people likes to hear."

"Well, I must say, there's no end to the conceitedness of young people. Here, Lance, you, only a brat of a boy as I may say—though a very good one—you're a-teaching me and me old enough to be your gran' fayther. I wonder ef you won't, some day, show me how to work my way into my egg, by telling me to crack it at the butt, and on the eend of the table. Jest you don't consarn yourself, my boy, in this business of the cappin, and ef I don't help him to git this rich widow, then poke your finger at my eyes whenever I goes to talk."

"Take care! That's all, sergeant. You'll be burning your fingers, some day, by a fire that you won't see till you're in it and can't back out."

The warning was in low tones. The party was quite too nigh the house to admit of more. Captain Porgy was already dismounting—a performance executed with less deliberation than usual, yet more effort. Let us add that it was successful; whatever the peril to his garments, they survived it; and he proceeded to ascend the steps of the dwelling, conducting to the piazza Young Arthur Eveleigh descended to meet him, catching his hand and welcoming him with a warm and hearty grasp, which

declared the impulsive and generous nature of the boy. Mrs Eveleigh stood at the head of the steps with her hand extended in welcome also. Her manner, simple and unaffected, genial and friendly, was that of the accomplished lady, well versed in the proper graces of society. Arthur Eveleigh remained on the steps to receive the followers of the partisan. These were welcomed up also; and a gracious bow was accorded them by the widow, when they reached the piazza. Here, they all seated themselves, following the example of the lady and the captain.

"The day is so mild and genial," said the widow, "that we have suffered the fire to go out. But you soldiers scarcely need a fire; and Arthur and myself, since breakfast, have not felt the want of one. We have been talking of you and your brave followers, captain, all the morning;—going, for the twentieth time, over all the details of that fearful day, from the perils of which you rescued us."

"Too happy you will believe, my dear Mrs. Eveleigh, in being of the slightest service to you," was the gallant answer of the captain.

"That was a most bloody leetle skirmage," put in the sergeant. "Them rascals gin you a most awful hitch, ma'am; and ef twarnt for the cappin thar, there's no telling what might have happen'd in the long run. It's the cappin, ma'am, that's about the best man, I ever seed, to fight for the women folk. He was born, I may say, to be their sav'or and purtector!"

Porgy glared sternly at the speaker, who, fancying he had been making a highly profitable, yet delicate suggestion, leered first at the widow, then at the captain while he spoke, with the manner of one who seems to say, "I have set the ball in motion —see that it don't come to the ground between you."

Mrs. Eveleigh answered the sergeant with a kind manner, saying—

"We owe him a great deal, certainly, sir, but we owe equally our gratitude to yourself and your young companion. My son, I am sure, will always regard you both as his friends, and if I do not adequately acknowledge your help, it is only because all language must fail to do so. I feel that, but for your arrival and timely and judicious succor, my son and all of us would have been murdered."

"That you would, ma'am! Them villains warn't a bit too good to sculp you in the bargain; but they've got their sass and dressing, and some on 'em will never trouble the high roads of this airth agin. For them that got off, it's jest enough to know that the cappin's in these quarters, and they'll be mighty cu'rous how they keeps out of them. I don't think they'll be the pussons to break into any henroosts in this part of the country Ef there was any man in this world born to be the nateral protector of a plantation, it's the cappin thar."

Porgy twitched uneasily in his chair, while the sergeant proceeded—

"Lawd, ma'am, to think that a pusson that can cut his way through an inimy's bloody bagnets, a whole rigiment, should be so tender at the same time, and sich a purtector of poor, trembling, dangerous wimmin! To think how a pusson that shouts so furious when he's at a charge—how soft he kin make his voice when it's to a woman he's got to speak! It's a-most wonderful, and not to be calkilated, the difference 'twixt the same man, when he's at them different dealings!"

Porgy could stand it no longer. He broke out—

"Why, Millhouse, Mrs. Eveleigh will suppose that I have employed you especially as my trumpeter, and not as my overseer. Shut up! my good fellow, or speak of your own valor and your own tenderness, if you please. As I have no apprehensions that I shall be suspected of any deficiency when either is needed it is no policy to insist upon them now, lest both of them becomes suspected."

The widow saw the captain's uneasiness and smiled pleasantly, as she said—

"The problem seems to puzzle Sergeant Miller—"

"Mill*house*, ma'am, of you please."

"Millhouse—Sergeant Millhouse—"

"There was a Sergeant Mil*ler*, ma'am, that b'longed to the Pennsylvany rigiment, and he went over to the innimy on that bloody affair when they wanted to sell Gineral Greene—you remember, I reckon; that time when the gineral sent off full speed to call the old fox, and we poor malitia men to keep his continentallers in order."

"I remember, sergeant. I am glad you corrected my error

It must be an unpleasant thing to be confounded, even by mistake, with a traitor."

"That's it, ma'am; you're sensible on the subject."

"Was there ever such a bullheaded monster!" quoth Porgy *sotto voce*. "You were remarking, Mrs. Eveleigh—"

"Upon the problem that seemed to puzzle Sergeant Mill-*house*," emphasizing the last syllable duly. "Yet, it seems to have been proverbial that the most brave-hearted are also the most tender-hearted, always, captain."

"The effect has commonly shown itself in the number of wars which have been occasioned by the sex, Mrs. Eveleigh. It is proverbial, also, that, when all other arguments fail to inspire the man with the proper courage, you have only to goad him in the presence of the lady whom he most admires."

"Ef anything will make him fight, ma'am, that will," put in the sergeant. "It's jest what you sees daily with these common dunghill fowls. They hain't got much heart for fighting at any time, yet, jest let the hen be nigh, when one's a-coming; and the other, though he run before, will dash up, and Lord, how he will make the feathers fly!—It's natur! and it shows the valley of the women in keeping up a good breed of sodgers in a country. And I do say that the women folks had as much to do in making our people fight the innimy as anything beside, and all besides. I 'member well, when I went out with Gineral Middleton agin the Cherokees. Well, you know thar was Grant, with his British rig'lars, along with us; and no great shakes they was, I tell you, in an Ingin skrimmage. Well, it used to make my very blood bile in my body, to see how them red coats made free with our young women at the farmhouses. Why, ma'am, they made no more ado of chucking the gals under the chin, and smacking at their lips, jest wherever they found 'em, than I would at kissing my own wife—ef 'taint ondecent for me to speak of my wife when I ain't got 'one, and never ixpect to have. But that ain't to pervent other people, what's more personable and better off, from getting a wife, I'm thinking."

And here the sergeant looked, with a leer the most significant and complacent, to the captain of partisans, whose disquiet was duly increasing. Mrs. Eveleigh, too, began to comprehend that there was something latent in the sergeant's speeches; but she

had no notion of his real purpose, and ascribed whatever was queer in his manner and words, to some eccentricity of character. Meanwhile, Arthur Eveleigh had attached himself to Lance Frampton, and the two young men had gone out to the stables. The widow felt the cal. to be elsewhere, but could not leave the parties at the moment; and the conversation proceeded, the lady opening upon another topic which was necessarily addressed wholly to the captain.

"You find everything in disorder, Captain Porgy. You have been a special sufferer, I know. You are probably not aware that I am in possession of some of your property."

"Indeed!"

"Yes. As an old friend of your family and self, when I heard of certain bands of loyalists about, knowing the practices of which they were guilty, I sent over several of my hands, and, with the aid of your servants, brought over to my house such of your furniture as had been left after their first foray. One Grainger had been before me, and had destroyed the family pictures, and made a fire, I was told, of certain pieces of furniture. As soon as he disappeared with his band, I secured your sideboard, a couple of chests of drawers, a few chairs and tables, a pair of fine old steel mirrors, and a variety of other articles, including knife-case, with knives and forks, decanters, glasses, and sundry small things, such as you will find useful. There was no plate that we could find—"

"It was all melted down in camp, Mrs. Eveleigh. We have been living on it in part—"

"Ah! I conjectured that; though, by the way, the report is that your own overseer, Halford, helped to spoil you, and would have effectually done so, but that he was accidentally killed at a great muster of the loyalists, near Coosawhatchie."

"He turned out to be a great scoundrel; went over to the British after serving a campaign with us. I suspected him before that event, and my discoveries probably led to his treachery. But I had not supposed that anything had been saved from the wreck of my furniture. My debt to you increases every hour, Mrs. Eveleigh."

"By no means, captain. I shall owe you a debt which my whole life could not repay."

"That's it!" cried Millhouse, slapping his thigh with his one hand. "That's it! I know'd it."

Porgy gave him a single stern look—then turning to the widow, said—

"Do not talk of any debt to me, my dear Mrs. Eveleigh; you owe me none. What was done for your rescue, by myself and my companions, would have been done in behalf of the poorest creature of the country—"

"Let me interrupt you, captain, by saying that, in like manner, what I have done for the saving of your chattels, in your absence, would have been done for any other neighbor. But, the better course would be to say nothing of these mutual services, however much we feel them."

"Edzactly—but the *feeling!*—" and the sergeant closed. The widow proceeded—

"I am rejoiced that I shall have you again for a neighbor!"

"And *nara* [never a] better *pur*tector of wimmen could be found!" quoth the sergeant, with an emphatic slap of his one hand upon his thigh. The lady did not seem to observe him, but proceeded.—

"And if in any respects I can be of service to you, particularly at the present moment, you have only to let me know, and—"

"There's a want of *everything*, I may say, ma'am, from plough to shovel. You see, ma'am, I'm to manage for the cappin, who's got some of the finest rice lands on this river."

"He has, indeed. I know them," said the widow.

"That's it, ma'am! You're right! It's so! I seed 'em; and they've had a long rest. They'll bring *all*fired fine crops; and I'll make 'em do it. Ef we had *your* force on them lands, now, Madam Eb'leigh, there's no telling what I could do! No, ma'am! There's no telling, 'twould be so magnisifent! But we've got only a mighty small force of *twenty-five* niggers!—"

This was said with a wave of the one hand and a twitching of the mouth, and a turning up of the nose, as if nothing could be more contemptible in the sight of the speaker. The air was that of one, who, born to command armies, was reduced to the necessity of expending his genius upon a corporal's guard. But the widow's surprise was at the number, not at their insignificance.

"Twenty-five!"

"A second instance of good fortune, my dear Mrs. Eveleigh. When I encountered you, I knew not that I had a negro in the world, besides Tom. You restored me seven; last night, my old nurse, Sappho, who has survived the wars and starvation for three years in the swamp, came in, and reported all her children and grand children as with her. She brought them in this morning, eighteen in number—"

"And who knows ma'am but there may be a hundred more where them come from," interposed Millhouse, dilating again into great dignity.

"Not likely! I fancy these are all I possess, Mrs. Eveleigh; they are more than I expected, and much more, perhaps than I deserve."

"It's not onpossible, ma'am, that there's a hundred. How should the cappin know? He's quite onknowing of all his sarcumstances, and for that matter, aint altogether the best pusson in the world to be looking a'ter them. That's what I tells him. Leave it all to me, cappin. He knows I'm right. He ecknowledges I'm his sense-keeper; and *I am*, in all business that b'longs to the making of a cr*ap*—"

"In all other matters too, it would appear. But, for the present, Millhouse, suffer me to be my own sense-keeper."

"You kaint, cappin, 'taint in you. Why, Madam Eb'leigh, he's the most wasteful and perfligit pusson in this heathen world. With, perhaps, not more than a hundred guineas in his pocket, he don't stop to throw one or two on 'em away, at a single lift, upon a beggar child, in charity like."

"A hundred guineas, sergeant? Why what are you talking about?" said Porgy, indignantly. "He has certainly the most overwhelming imagination! He has converted these eight or ten pieces into a treasure!"—With the words, Porgy drew forth the few gold pieces which he had, from his pocket, and exposed them in his palm to view.

"This is all that I possess in the shape of money."

The sergeant wheeled about, indignant at the exposure, drawing up every feature in vexation, and tossing his one hand in air as if everything were lost. The widow saw the action, and began to understand his character. She looked to Porgy with a

smile. He strove to smile in reply, but the effort was a feeble one, and the result only a faint and counterfeit presentment. He was disquieted the more, as he began to fear, from the widow's looks, that she not only saw into Millhouse's character, but suspected his desires. It was, accordingly, something of a relief to both the parties when Arthur Eveleigh, just at this moment, reappeared with the lieutenant. Mrs. Eveleigh seized the occasion to invite her guests to take refreshment, and led the way for them into the dwelling. As Porgy followed, Millhouse nudged him with his elbow.

"How could you do it?" he murmured—"Show jest that leetle heap when I was a-spreading you out?"

"Pshaw, fool!" was the muttered thunder which saluted the sergeant in reply, the captain fiercely pressing forward, and completely covering the entrance as he did so.

"Fool!" growled the sergeant to himself. "Well, that's for sarving a pusson what don't desarve it."

"Here is some old Madeira, captain, and some Jamaica. Please show the way to your friends—my son does not drink."

"Why, ma'am," quoth Millhouse, possessing himself of a beaker, and approaching the widow—"you don't mean to let the young man go without a sodger's edication."

"His father was a soldier, sir, yet it was his dying injunction that Arthur should never drink."

"Well, that's mighty strange, I swow! 'Twouldn't ha' done in *our* sarvice, where the only way to forgit that you had nothing to eat, was to git r'yal drunk on what you had. Here's your health, ma'am, and my sarvice to you, ma'am, for ever."

The lady bowed, and Porgy, having refreshed himself with such a glass of Madeira as he had not often enjoyed for years, withdrew, at a motion from Mrs. Eveleigh, to an adjoining room.

"Why, whar's the cappin!" cried Millhouse, who had been lingering over his liquor.

"And whar's the widow, too?" looking around him. Young Arthur stared at this familiarity, but his glance was not remarked by the speaker, "Ah! I see!" he continued, with a chuckle. "All's right! Lawd, ef people only had the sense to see the thing what's afore 'em."

"What did you say, sir!" said young Arthur, addressing our

soliloquist — and evidently somewhat dubious that there was something offensive in what he had spoken; forming this conjecture rather from the expression of Millhouse's face than from anything in his words.

"Oh! it's you, young master! So, you're not to drink while you live! Well, to a man whose nater is usen'd to the thing, like mine, that would be mighty hard! But you don't feel the hardship yit; and you're young. But it's a darn'd sight better, let me tell you, never to l'arn to like it, than to long for it arterwards when it's not to be got. That's a feeling, let me tell you, for I've had it, jest as much like the devil having you on an eend and no help for it, as anything on this etarnal airth. But, Lord, to know as how you kaint drink makes me a leetle thirsty, and ef it's your pleasure, I'll score me down two."

"If you please, sir," answered the young man; an assent for which the veteran did not wait. He had already prepared the Jamaica. Lifting the draught which he had mixed, he pointed to Lance Frampton — "Now," said he — "thar's one that makes his own law agin liquor. He won't taste a bit, but only to pleasure company, and then he takes it most like as ef 'twas physic. There's something wrong in one's natur, when you see that. It's a sign he aint got nateral good taste and good sense. And he aint. He's good at a scout and he kin shoot like blazes, rifle or Ingin bow; and he's not afear'd of Samson and Zebeedee, the Philistians; but, Lord, that's all; he aint the sense; he kaint see; kaint see some things when they're jest onder his nose, and a' axing him to look and be satisfied."

Frampton laughed, and Arthur Eveleigh followed his example. The latter now began narrowly to consider Millhouse as a study. The sergeant, finding that he had secured attention, strode the floor, glass in hand, sipping and dilating as he went. At last, finishing his glass, he said to Arthur:—

"Your ma! she's out with the cappin somewhere, eh! They've got some sly talking to do together?"

There was a grin on his face as he spoke, which young Eveleigh could not comprehend, and which he did not by any means relish. He simply bowed affirmatively.

"Ha!" said Millhouse laying his one hand on the youth's shoulder,—"the cappin's the man to show you fine things. He's

a most wonderful man, and you'll l'arn to like him famous,—to love him I may say—to love him as ef he was a born friend, and brother, an uncle, and a son,—as ef he was your own born father. Eeny young man on this airth might be happy to have him for a father!"

"Is he drunk?" queried Arthur, when he and Lance again got out together, which they did soon after.

"No!" said the other—"it's only a strange way he's got of talking foolish things—he don't know much what."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

PORGY FINDS A BANKER.

The widow motioned the captain to a seat, and took one near him. Her manner was full of the sweetest frankness, and an easy familiarity. With a smile, as soon as he had seated himself, she said—

"Captain Porgy, I am about to take a liberty with you, which you must excuse on the score of old acquaintance, near neighborhood, the interest I feel in your prosperity, and the gratitude which I owe you for the great service which you have so lately rendered me."

"Do not speak of that, Mrs. Eveleigh——"

"Oh! but I must speak of it, captain, in some degree to justify myself, if only *to* myself, for the freedom which I take with you."

"Ah! madam," with a courtly bow and expressive smile, "you can have no sufficient idea of the extent of your own privileges, where I am concerned."

"Thank you," answered the lady, quietly; "I am disposed to presume upon them, and will say what I have to deliver without further apologies."

"Pray do so, my dear madam."

"Briefly, then, captain, I am not ignorant of the embarrassments which environ you, and the difficulties in the way of your success. I know how much you have been a loser by the war, and how great were your obligations before the war began."

"Ah! madam, do not, I pray, remind me how greatly I have been the profligate."

"I will not, unnecessarily. You have only committed a too common error of our people in these parishes; allowing hospitality and good fellowship to fling prudence out of the windows. Of course, you have to pay the usual penalties; but it is due to you that your friends should see that you do not suffer too greatly. At this moment, what is left to you of your property can only be made of profit to you, by the help of a little ready money; and of this commodity I suspect, you have not been able to find enough in the army chest of General Marion to pay up your account against the country. You have got but little pay at the close of the war."

"Not a copper, ma'am! A few guineas,—as you have seen —the loan of a friend, enough to pay my way for a week in the city——"

"I thought so. Now you will want supplies for the plantation; clothes for the negroes; provisions, utensils; a thousand things which it should be your policy to buy *for cash*, at this moment when money is scarce, and the stock in the city is necessarily large. With provisions, I can supply you on an easy credit; implements and utensils for working the crop, I can lend you for present use; I have a wagon to spare you for a season; and—"

"Ah! my dear madam, you overwhelm me!"

"Hear me out, captain! With all these things I can supply you without the slightest inconvenience myself; nay, driving a good bargain with you all the while. Oh! you will see that I am sufficiently selfish. True, I can *lend* you second-hand ploughs and shovels, hoes and axes, cart and wagon; but I mean to sell you corn and bacon at a good price—"

"But the pay!"

"Oh! I know you have no money, but you have credit—"

"I don't know—"

"Yes, you have; with *me*, at least, captain, and you must use it You shall have corn and fodder, rice and bacon, on loan, or

on a credit, as you think proper. If you make a good crop this season, return me what you borrow, *if you can*; if not, you shall pay me, *when able*, at the present rates for these articles."

"You are very indulgent, my dear madam, but—"

"Hear me a little farther. I must have no 'buts.' You will need money in the city. You might borrow it there, *possibly*; though that is very doubtful at this moment. But it is fortunate that I can help you to a sum adequate to your necessities and wants."

"My dear Mrs. Eveleigh—"

"Stop, captain, let me do the talking for awhile, if only in the assertion of my feminine privilege. Wait till I confess to the exhaustion of *my* budget, and you can then proceed to show the contents of yours. I have some money not only to spare, but some that I desire to lend. I wish it out at interest. I wish it safely invested. It is no great deal, yet I should not like to lose it. It will be safe in your hands. I can let you have five hundred guineas."

Porgy's face saddened. His head drooped into his palms. For a moment he was silent. Then raising his head, he said—

"This is a great kindness, Mrs. Eveleigh, which is more precious to me by far than the possession of all your wealth. It touches me, my dear madam, to the soul. It takes from me the power to answer. How shall I answer — how declare my thoughts, my thanks, my gratitude—"

"It is my turn now to employ your own language. Not a word of gratitude. Let us speak of this only in the way of business. It is a business transaction simply. I have money to put out at interest, and you would borrow money. You shall have mine—"

"Here, again, my dear madam, I must falter. I certainly do need money, but it will be at the lender's peril that he lends. I have no security to offer."

"What! With one of the best rice-plantations along the river, and twenty-five negroes?"

"Ah! madam, you know not half of my ill-fortune. You do not know that my plantation is mortgaged to a voracious creditor, for thrice its value, and that this mortgage pressed, at this juncture, will swallow every negro that I own."

"I know the whole—the worst! I know that you are at the mercy of one M'Kewn, a person who is supposed to show no mercy if a selfish policy prompts the other way; I know that he has a lien upon your plantation, to a far greater amount than the place will sell for; but I also understand, captain, that he has no lien upon your negroes—"

"Ah! madam, how is that?"

"These are not mortgaged. They will become liable for your debt to M'Kewn should he obtain a judgment against you, and a part of my scheme is to make you indebted *to me*, that we may save these negroes *from him*. You shall *borrow* my money, *buy* my corn and bacon, and give *me* a mortgage upon the negroes, which shall at all events secure them from him."

"You are my saving angel. By Jove, my dear madam, you take me from out of the depths. I have been desponding, in the very slough of despair, for a week past. You hold me up by the locks while drowning. I accept your offer. Now that I can give you security, I will take your loan. God bless you, my dear Mrs. Eveleigh, you have made my heart of a sudden very light."

The captain caught the widow's hand, carried it to his lips, and kissed it fervently. At that moment, he thought it the prettiest and whitest hand he had ever seen. When he looked up, the widow saw the moisture in his eyes, but, like a considerate lady, took no heed of it. She proceeded without seeming conscious of his raptures.

"This understood, captain, let us see how the arrangement can be carried out. In anticipation of your acceptance of my proposition, I had prepared these letters. Here is one for Saunders & Dart, which will procure for you five hundred guineas, or even more should you need it, on your giving a mortgage upon a sufficient number of your slaves, their value to be estimated at the present market prices."

"You shall have a mortgage upon them all, my dear madam."

The widow smiled.

"Not so, captain. You forget that twenty-five negroes are worth a great deal more."

"True; but I prefer that they should be secured to you, lest they fall into worse hands."

"But my dear sir, suppose I were to die, what would be your security? My lien would be a valid one."

"My security is in your son. You have only to confide to him the transaction. I have every confidence that a son, trained by you, must be a youth of honor."

The widow looked at the speaker with affectionate gravity.

"Be it so," she said; "I will, however, see that there shall be a legal security which shall protect you, even from my son. Here is another letter which I should suppose scarcely necessary, since you, yourself, must know the party to whom it is addressed."

Porgy read the address—

"'Charles Cotesworth Pinckney!'—surely, I know him well. We have served together! I knew him well before the war."

"Nevertheless, take the letter, and confide your legal difficulties to him. He must save you from M'Kewn, if possible. He can do so, if anybody can. I have already spoken to him of your affairs; do you get him to revise your accounts with M'Kewn. There are some particulars, in respect to this man, which move me to suspect him of great frauds in your case and that of other persons. At present, I will say nothing of what I know or suspect; but if I could recover the box which was stolen from me the other day by these outlaws, I could show you a paper which, I think, would give us a hold upon this person, M'Kewn, by which we should compel him to come to reasonable terms. But it is needless that we should speak of this now. Here are the letters. I have said all that I have to say."

"You have saved me, Mrs. Eveleigh. What woman would have done for me what you have done?"

"Many, I trust; knowing the circumstances, and in the same condition to serve you."

The captain shook his head, and, taking her hand, said—

"You are a wonder of a widow! You have the soul of a man!"

She smiled.

"I suppose I must take such a speech as a compliment, coming from one of the masculine gender."

"Ah!" said he, "you know what I mean! You are not a girl—not a child—not frivolous or feeble. You *have* a soul! You

have earnestness and simplicity, and these make sincerity of character. You have faith, too, and—"

"Which, by the way, captain, is not often a manly virtue.—There, I fancy, is where our sex has the advantage of yours. You, perhaps, are an exception. Here, for example, you are willing to trust me and my boy, with all your property, without any security."

"Ah, madam, I could cheerfully give it to you both, did you need it. The pleasurable feeling of sweet faith and confidence, and generous unreserve, and liberal sympathy, which you have this day shown me, is more grateful to me than any amount of wealth or money. I now know where I can confide. I feel, too, that there is one, at least, who can confide in me. We do not watch each other as victims, or as birds of prey; seeking to devour, fearing to be devoured. Madam, if you will permit me, I will be your friend—your friend."

She gave him her hand.

"No more now, captain; let us go to the hall, I hear the dinner signal."

They rose; she led the way out, but paused at the door.

"By the way, captain, your one-armed soldier seems a very queer creature."

The captain seemed annoyed, and peered into the eyes of the widow, as if to fathom the extent of her discoveries or her suspicions.

"Yes," said he, "a very queer creature. He will say many things to surprise you. Army life sometimes spoils a good fellow, who, if he remained humble, might be a favorite. Don't heed him, I pray you. He is good enough in his way—devoted to me—imprudently devoted, I may say; and sometimes officious enough to save me against my will."

"Surely, you should not complain of such officiousness."

"I don't know! One would have a vote in these matters. The sergeant's friendship is not sufficiently indulgent. Still, he is devoted to me—would die for me, without a murmur, and fight for me to the last; but the scoundrel wants to *think* for me, also; and that is an offence—if the thing were not so ridiculous—that I should not much tolerate His misfortune is not to know how much a simpleton he is."

"Simpleton! I should suppose him rather shrewd than simple," said the widow, with a smile.

"Yes; he is shrewd after a fashion—shrewd in all those respects which belong to his mode of life, and the narrow range of his intellect. He is shrewd, like the beaver or the possum: knows how to find a shelter for his hide, and can find, by instinct, where the corn and acorn may be gathered. He will house and hive, while I should freeze and starve, perhaps. It is his misfortune that his sharpness has stimulated his self-esteem, as is usually the case with persons of his class who prove successful. If, for example he should drive a great bargain in rice or butter, he would just as lief explain the law to Cotesworth Pinckney, as to Tom, my cook. Ten to one should he see you at the harpsichord, he will give you a lesson in music."

"I shall be careful how I afford him the chance."

"He is only a grub, a human grub, with a monstrous instinct for acquisition and saving; no more; but withal useful, and to be cherished—at a distance. I have suffered him to come too near, and familiarity has somewhat blunted me to his obtrusiveness. I see the evil of it only when he comes in contact with others. He has been faithful, however, and I can not cast him off. As long as I have a home, he must share it."

"Fordham tells me that he is to be your overseer."

"He volunteered; insists that he knows all about it; and has set his heart so completely upon it, that, even if I wished it otherwise, I could not well deny him. At all events, I will give him a fair trial this season."

"Fordham will cheerfully assist him."

"Oh! bless you, he fancies he can teach Fordham his business. I tell you he is a simpleton."

"But he must not be suffered to ruin your crop."

"Fordham shall assist *me*, with a hint, should there be any reason to suspect this danger. Meantime, dear madam, please give the fellow no heed. He will say many things that will startle, if not offend. But the blockhead means no evil.—Will you take my arm?"

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE SERGEANT PUTS A SPOKE IN THE CAPTAIN'S WHEEL.

As the captain and the widow emerged from the inner room into the hall, they discovered the sergeant pacing to and fro, around the apartment. As soon as he saw them, he exclaimed, almost loud enough for everybody to hear—

"Arm in arm, by the pipers. Lord! how the world moves!"

And he advanced to them, bowing, with the most complacent grin.

"Dinner is a-waiting, I'm a-thinking; but Lord! there's some business that mus'n't be hurried. A man must take his time, ma'am, in *some* things, even though the roast-beef is a-cooling on the dish. Eh, cappin!"

And, wheeling to leeward of the captain, as he spoke, he thrust the stump of his game-arm into the ribs of his superior. Porgy turned quickly, and gave the subordinate a look speaking daggers; but the other only grinned.

"All right, I see!" said he, "thar's the track. Go ahead!—Dinner below! I've been down a'ready to see how it's laid out. Things look mighty nice. Good management in this house.—Roast-beef for dinner;—a round of corn-beef—*also!* Tongue! cabbage! potatoes! Seen 'em all in the kitchen. Woman cook! Had a talk with her. Good cook enough; but scolds like thunder, and lays on with a double fist when the boy don't fly.—Hem!—How she kin laugh! It's a sensible woman that laughs out free. Sign there ain't no vinegar in the nater."

Such—as the widow and Porgy led the way into the basement—was the running fire of speech which the sergeant kept up audible to all. The widow laughed outright as she listened, and, though somewhat startled by the merry peal which he heard, we yet see that the reflections which it provoked in the mind of the old soldier were not of a disagreeable nature. Lance Frampton and young Eveleigh followed; the latter wondering, as well

he might at the speech and conduct of Millhouse; but satisfied to think, with Frampton, that he was simply silly and with no harm in him. The dinner-table was spread as the parties entered the saloon. The sergeant has already given us a notion of the viands put before them. The widow took her seat at one end of the table; her son at the other; Porgy occupied a side to himself, while the lieutenant and sergeant took the other. A couple of liveried servants were in waiting. The lady herself pronounced a grace, and the proceedings began. Porgy was in good spirits. His mind was somewhat relieved of its troubles, and the sight of dinner was calculated always to give it animation. The return to well-known aspects of civilization, so different from his camp experience, was also a source of unspeakable satisfaction.

"Ah! madam!" said he, "I feel, as I look around me, that I may once more become a gentleman. I have been little more than a savage for the last five years. The camp makes sad havoc in the tastes of a gentleman. Rough fare, rough usage, the bare earth for a table, lean beef, bad soup, no bread, frequently no salt, and bad cooking—these are enough to endanger any man's humanity. Talk of patriotism as you will, but, truth to speak, we pay a monstrous high price for it in such conditions as we have been subjected to in this warfare."

"But it does so sweeten the heart, cappin, when we gits a good dinner like this here, at the last. Now, this is what I calls a raal good dinner, Madam Eb'leigh. That roast is done jest to a right brownness; though I was beginning to git mighty jubous that it would be overdone, a-waiting for you and the cappin. I was beginning to think that you was a-sarving the cook *on*justly. Now, you've got a mighty good cook, for a woman. She ain't edzactly up to our Tom, I'm a-thinking; but then Tom's a merracle of a cook, and at stew, roast, brile or bake, he ain't got his match, I've a notion, in the whole country. But your cook'll do. She's monstrous cross and ugly. I hed a talk with her in the kitchen afore dinner—but she knows how to do a thing, and the way she makes the leetle niggers fly, is a sensible sight for any man that wants to know how a nigger ought to be managed. Now, ef she was about six months under our Tom, he'd make her fuss-rate."

The sergeant made this long speech while waiting upon Frampton, who, on *public* occasions, like the present, officiated as his carver. This duty was not often needful in camp where one grasped his bannock in one hand and his slice of bacon in the other; where the carver was as frequently the broadsword as the knife, and the fingers supplied all deficiency of forks. Mrs. Eveleigh smiled as she answered—

"Old Peggy would scarcely tolerate being sent to school at this time of day, even to such a proficient as the captain's Tom. She has as rare an opinion of her own merits as a cook, as if she had graduated with all the honors fifty years ago. But I have no doubt of Tom's superior merits. Colonel Singleton has been frequent in his praises, and Cotesworth Pinckney insists upon him as beyond all comparison in a terrapin stew."

"Pinckney knows," said Porgy, "if any man. He has a proper taste for the creature comforts, and has done me the honor, frequently, to discuss with me Tom's performances in this preparation. But 'old Peggy' needn't fear comparison with anybody. This beef is excellent. Pray, Mrs. Eveleigh, how did you save your cattle from the marauders."

"As I saved everything else, captain, by having friends on both sides of the question. The leading whigs were personally friendly; while the rank and position of my husband, in the British army, secured me protection on that quarter. He was intimate, besides, with General Leslie, and this was of great importance to my interests. Since the general has been in command, I have lost nothing. The result, I confess, has made me somewhat unpatriotic. I supplied the enemy with aid and comfort, but always, in the phrase of the tradesmen, for a *consideration*. I sold cattle and rice to the commissaries, and always got the first prices. I thought it better wisdom to do this, than make enemies by refusing, and have my cattle driven off, and my houses burnt. The war, accordingly, which has ruined so many has made my fortune."

"Well, ma'am, ef you'll jest listen to me, you'll be axing how you're to keep the fortin! It's a mighty deal easier to make a fortin than to keep it. I reckon thar's few women that kin keep what they makes. It's for them to find out the right sort of hands to put it in Ef they trusts themselves, it's a-most always

sure to slip through their fingers. All women ought to have a guardeen, by law and natur'. And the guardeen, in course, ought to be a man-body. Now the nateral needcessity of a woman, I may say, jest so soon as she gits old enough, is to git a husband. A husband is the only nateral guardeen of a grown woman; and when she's so foolish that she hems and haws about it, the law, or, if thar's no law, the gov'nor, the gineral, or whatever's the off'cer in command, he ought to look through the ranks, and pick her out the right sawt of a man. That's what I say ought to be the way in every well-regilated family or country."

Having made this significant and philosophical speech, the sergeant plied his fork in his plate and gave his tongue a brief respite. The lady looked at the captain, whose consternation and chagrin, apparent in his face, gave it the most lugubrious expression; she smiled, and her blue eyes twinkled merrily; and he, unable to control the sudden impulse, laid down knife and fork, and burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter. The widow felt the contagious influence and yielded to it. She laughed with the frank, hearty, impulsive spirit of girlhood. Arthur Eveleigh looked at both bewildered; but Lance Frampton, catching faint glimpses of the sergeant's impudent absurdities, and taking his cue from his superiors, chuckled in under tones, as in due respect for the company. Millhouse looked up with astonishment, fork in hand, prongs upward, and a huge gobbet of roast-beef hanging from them at the opening doorways of his jaws.

"Well, I'd jest like to know what's the fun about! I kain't see edzactly, but I reckon, now, it's something I've been a-saying, and I don't see what I've said so cur'ous. What's it? I only said that a grown woman, with a fortin, ought to hev' a guardeen, and I says that it's only nateral she should; and who's to be her guardeen, but a man-body, what kin take care of her and her property; and what man-body but her husband. An' what's to laugh at in all that, is what I don't edzactly see."

"That's good logic, sergeant, whatever we may say for the philosophy," quoth Porgy.

"Well, I don't mean it for any logic or philos'phy; but I mean it for the *natèral* law in the case; the straight fora'd up and down, *sense* and the religion and the reason of the thing;

and if it ain't all them, why I ain't fit to know nothing about man and woman in this breathing world, that's so full of them. I've sarved, Madam Eb'leigh, in many sitiwations, and that's why I've l'arned to know more things than other pussons; and what I say to you that's strange to your way of feeling and thinking, is, prehaps, only bekase you hain't seed so much of this airth, and the people in it, as I've seed and know'd. But what I says, I don't mean for no offence, ma'am, though, moutbe, the wisdom of the thing is what you hain't quite come up to, being a woman body, and not having an equal chance with we men pussons."

"Oh! no offence, sergeant; on the contrary, I am very much pleased at the novelty of your suggestions. They are, certainly, rather new to me——"

"I reckon'd as how they would be, ma'am. I hain't often found the pusson, man or woman, that know'd quite as much as me, and that's maybe, bekase they hain't had the chaince. You ladies, hain't much chaince in this world to l'arn much about it, seeing as how you lives pretty much to yourselves; and bekase when men talks to you, they us'ally talks about foolish things; music and dancing, and dress, and how people looks and talks, and what they says of one another and themselves. But, I don't *im*prove, no how, of that way of talking. I don't see, bekaise a woman's a woman, that she shouldn't l'arn to be sensible like us men. But ef what I says is onpleasant to you, I'll stop. I don't mean no offence, no how, as I'm a free white pusson, and a sodger of liberty."

"Surely, no offence, sergeant; I beg that you will go on. I like to hear your views of these subjects."

Porgy gave the widow an appealing look, but her eyes twinkled back with glances of mischievous merriment. The worthy captain, by way of a diversion, seized the decanter.

"Mrs. Eveleigh, may I take wine with you?"

The widow graciously accorded the desired permission, and the parties bowed and sipped.

"Help yourself with wine, Lieutenant Frampton; Sergeant Miller, perhaps—"

"Mill-*house*, ma'am, ef you please."

"Pardon me, sergeant—"

"Oh! no offence, ma'am; only you see, there was one Miller of the Pennsylvany Line, that was hung up for lying and stealing and sich like treasonable offences. He was a sort of Gineral Arnold for rapscalties, and I don't like to have my name called after him."

"I'm very sorry, Sergean Mill-*house;* but perhaps, you will join Lieutenant Frampton."

"Thank you, ma'am; but ef you please, I'd much prefer to hev' *you* for a partner; and, ef you'd let me, I'd rether try *my* liquor out of this here diccanter"—touching the Jamaica. "This old rum seems the nateral drink of a sodger. The wine is a trifling sort of liquor that's made, I'm a-thinking, most for the use of women."

"As you please, sergeant. Your good health, sir, and much happiness."

"The same to you, ma'am. A lady of your fortin' desarves all sorts of happiness, but, as I've been saying, thar's no safety for the fortin', and I may say thar's but leetle chance for happiness, to any grown woman, onless she has a nateral guardeen, and that guardeen ought to be a good husband; and ef I was the woman, Madam Eb'leigh, to choose, I'd be for taking my husband out of the army. A sodger, who is an off'cer, is about the best of guardeens for a woman. He's naterally use to command, you see, and he'll keep all things straight. Ef so be you was invaded, why, here he is on the spot to defend the post, and rigilate the garrison, and train the troops, even though they be only nigger troops; and to carry 'em into battle with a hollering and a whooping that'll make the inimy trimble. Lord, ma'am, thar's no telling the vartues of such a guardeen in a family. He'll fight the enemy till all smokes ag'in, and, same time, he'll keep the garrison in right order, ready, at the word of command whether it's to fight or run. I wish you, ma'am, a nateral guardeen, from the line of the army, for the p*ur*tection of your family and fortin'!"

Thus speaking, the sergeant waved his glass to the lady, and swallowed the contents of the tumbler at one gulph.—His eyes next sought the countenance of his captain, and he was taken aback by the mixed look of horror and anger which he there beheld. He could not understand the expression at all. He

fancied he had been doing the thing most handsomely, and that he should thereby secure the captain's eternal gratitude. He had somehow received the impression that Porgy was rather a bashful person among women, and he felt that it was a becoming duty on his part, to help him forward, and make the way clear before him. That he should have only annoyed and mortified him never occurred to him for a single moment; and he did not even now, while he watched the looks of his superior, fancy for a second that he had given any cause for the expression of countenance which he saw him wear. He rather thought that the captain labored under some sudden indisposition.

"Air you sick, cappin? You look so. Somethin's disagreed with you, I reckon."

"I should think so!" answered Porgy, with an audible groan.

"Take some of that Jamaica," cried the veteran, pushing the decanter across the table. "It's that Frenchified stuff you've been a-drinking. I never did hev' any opinion of that sort of washy liquor. Try the Jamaica."

"Not a drop, sir!" answered the captain, sternly, pushing the bottle from him. "Not a drop. You cannot know what's the matter, sir; if you could ——"

Porgy arrested himself. Speech and look were equally tending to an explosion. Millhouse very complacently responded —

"Well, thar's mighty few cases of trouble in the body, that I kain't know what to do for. There's the stomach and the liver, and the witals,—why, cappin, for any trouble in either of them, there's no physic like Jamaica. Sometimes it's an inside, sometimes it's an outside, epplication; but every way it's a-most always good. I don't mean to say, Madam Eb'leigh, that it's so good as Madara for troubles of women as for the troubles of men; but I'd rether resk my chainces on Jamaica, than on eeny other physic I ever seed. It's most powerful vartious in curing me of my troubles. Why, ma'am, when it's the bowels, we'll say—"

"Sergeant Millhouse!" cried Porgy, in a voice of thunder.

"Cappin!"

"Silence in the ranks, sir!"

"I'm shet up!" responded, *sotto voce*, the military martinet, now satisfied that the captain had misconceived some of those suggestions which he had put forth for his good. He pitied his inexpe-

rience, looked at him with a respectful sort of sorrow, then dashed his fork into the meats of his plate, and proceeded to give his teeth double exercise for the rigorous inactivity imposed upon his tongue. Meanwhile Porgy groaned again aloud, in utter vexation of spirit. He could eat no more. His appetite was utterly gone, and as he gazed upon the untasted good things before him, which he had no longer the disposition to touch, he felt that he could never forgive the offender.

"You do not eat, captain," said the widow, with interest, the pleasant light still in her eye, in which the worthy captain of partisans read enough for his discomfiture. He fancied that the widow comprehended the whole game of the sergeant, and naturally dreaded lest she should suspect how greatly she had been the subject of their conferences and calculations. Her late generous treatment of him and sympathy in his affairs, rendered the doubt trebly oppressive and painful. At all events, Millhouse was silenced, though the result was reached by a process which, sufficiently legitimate in camp, was hardly to be justified at the dinner-table, and in the presence of a lady. The widow felt very much like protesting against the assertion of military rule at her board, and by one of her guests; and was half tempted by the spirit of mischief to set the sergeant again free, by provoking him to farther revelations of his peculiar philosophy. But she felt that the annoyance of Porgy had been sufficient, and was rather apprehensive that, with so blunt a speaker as Millhouse, whose experience was so various, and whose knowledge was so universal, she, herself, might come in for a share of the disquiet which oppressed the captain. But she employed her art, successfully, in dissipating the cloud about her company, and Porgy recovered after awhile, sufficiently to unite with her in the effort. It was of no small importance to the object, that Millhouse did not lose his appetite; and a full enjoyment of the feast, made him soon forgetful of the tempest he had provoked.

"I hain't eat such a dinner, Madame Eb'leigh, sence I don't know when!" was his grateful acknowledgment, as he pushed away his emptied plate, and proceeded to replenish his tumbler from the portly decanter of Jamaica.

"I'm glad that you've the appetite, sergeant, which rarely allows any sort of dinner to be unsatisfactory."

"Thank ye, ma'am; but ef you think I'd lay in as I've been a-doing, with nothing better afore me, than the or'nary rations of the camp-kettle, even with our Tom's cooking, you're very much out. It's the good things you've gin us, ma'am, that's made me dewour enough to sarve seventeen red-skins on a scout. I'm a-most ashamed to see what I've been a-doing; pretickilarly as it don't seem to me that other people have been a-doing anything to speak of it in the same way. The cappin thar' has a-most eaten nothin'."

The captain eyed him with such a glance as the hyena might be supposed to bestow upon the beast which had somehow deprived him of his prey; but he said nothing. We need not show how the rest of the day was spent. The widow was cordial to the close. Millhouse was invited to see Fordham for what he wanted, in his capacity as overseer; and the details were fully explained and understood, by which the implements for working, the hoes, shovels, ploughs, and wagon, were to be transferred, and when, from the one plantation to the other. Porgy had again some words in private with the widow, a fact which again extorted shows of undisguised delight and exultation on the part of the sergeant. Lance Frampton made engagements for a deer hunt with Arthur Eveleigh, the two youths seeming equally well pleased with each other; and after friendly adieus, the guests rode away; Porgy clapping spurs to his steed, and going ahead with a haste which declared for the continued irritation of his mood, and which disquieted the sergeant a little to keep up with; as he declared that, "efter sich a dinner, one don't like to hurry about nither!" When the two followers did reach their leader, he did not seem in the humor to notice either; but Millhouse was not satisfied that his exertions should go without acknowledgment.

"Well, cappin," says he, "it's a good beginning of the war. We've broke ground fairly in the inimy's country, and we've come off well after the first skrimmage. What a dinner she gin us!—And then how lib'ral she offered everything. Ef ever I seed a better chaince for a straight up and down courtship than this, I kaint jest now call it to mind. She gin you a mighty fine chaince, cappin, them two times when you hed her all alone by her oneself; and the first time you was with her, I reckon more'n

an hour. I'm only hoping you warn't mealy-mouthed, seeing you had to deal with a widow. The cards was in your hand, and a famous game you hed to play, cappin, ef you know'd what you was about."

It was with singular deliberation, drawing up his horse, and looking at the speaker with a savage sort of smile, that Porgy answered—

"I suppose, Sergeant Millhouse, that you fancy you have helped this game wonderfully."

"Reckon I hev'! I show'd you whar the trump cards laid.—I've put a good spoke into your wheel."

"A spoke indeed! Hereafter, sergeant, let me put in my own spokes, will you. Let me play my own game, if you please; I need no assistance."

And the splenetic captain, driving spurs into his horse, went off at a pace, that left the two followers far behind him.

"The cappin's mighty snappish to-day," quoth Millhouse to his companion.

"And a right to be so. If he had snapped off your head, he'd have served you right. What business have you to be meddling with his courtings, if so be it's that he's after."

"Why, Lord, that was to help him only."

"He don't want your help, I reckon. He's a full-grown man, I suppose. Besides, it's enough to ruin a man, seeing the way you go to work. I don't know much about women folks but I'm pretty sure, any woman of sense, will be mighty apt to sicken of a man if she sees he gits his courting done by another."

"Teach your grandmother how to suck eggs. As ef I didn't know about the matter; but that's your foolishness. There's no sich thing as a woman of sense, you see; they ain't made for it. It's according to nater that man is to find them all the sense they've got any use for. Talk to me about wimmen! Why, Lance, I've kissed more purty gals than you ever seed, and never seed the woman yit that I couldn't hev' had for the axing."

"Oh! that's your conceit only. You think so because you're so conceited."

"I know so, my lad; and that's perhaps the reason jest why I never married ceny. 'Twould ha' seemed like a surrenderin'

to the inimy at the first summons, and I'm not that sort of sodger."

"Well, sergeant," quoth the lieutenant, "I'm just willing to say that you're about the conceitedest person that ever served in the army; and, moreover, I'm a-thinking from all you say, that a woman is, just of all animals, the hardest for you to understand. You haven't begun to know 'em; and the way you talked to Madam Eveleigh to-day — you thought it mighty fine — was just such foolishness as ought to hang a man. Even her son, Arthur, thought you was insulting to his mother, and I had to tell him that you was a very foolish sort of person, and that it was a foolish way you had of talking about things you don't understand; and he mus'n't mind you."

"You told him I was a fool, did you?"

"That I did!"

"You did!"

"Yes, indeed!"

"Me a fool! That I should be called a fool by such a hop-o'-my-thumb as you — you long-bodied snipe — you snake without a head — you leetle eend of a sarcumstance! Lord! how I could thump you now. I jest feel like tumbling you from your critter. Me a fool! Well, I'll tell that to the cappin. Ef I don't, p'int your finger at me and say 'squash!' Me, a fool! Mighty good, indeed! Mighty good!"

Frampton rode on coolly, never heeding him and never answering. When they reached Glen-Eberley, Captain Porgy was already there, alighted, and seated, pipe in his mouth, in his piazza.

Millhouse knew quite enough of his superior to take care not to disturb him in his mood. Though obtuse and presumptuous, he had been taught to observe the features and deportment of the captain, so as to time his approaches. His recent blunderings were the result of an unusual condition of elevation, which blinded his ordinary faculties. But the captain's manner and Frampton's suggestions had opened his eyes. Accordingly, specially avoiding speech, he entered the house, filled his pipe, and going down to the basement story, seated himself beneath the piazza where Porgy was giving voluminous breath to his chibouque. With no offences to atone for, Lance Frampton

forebore, in like manner, to obtrude upon the sultan. He busied himself about the horses and the negroes, and found employment out of doors for the rest of the evening.

Meanwhile, the clouds gradually cleared away, and, by the time supper was ready, Porgy had recovered his good humor. His bowl of coffee was enjoyed with satisfaction and composure, and his irritation being subdued, he had leisure to reflect upon the improved prospects in his affairs, which were due to the widow's liberality. It was not in his nature to suppress or conceal his good tidings from his companions, and when the supper things had been removed, Millhouse, somewhat humbled, Frampton, as usual, quiet, Tom and Pomp rather loitering about than in attendance, the captain proceeded to unfold his budget, and put his followers in possession of the facts in his good fortune. They were all overjoyed. Tom was the first to speak.

"Hah! enty I bin know. Da's good woman, Miss Eb'leigh. He hab sense. He no like dem fool woman wha' don't know how to 'habe [behave] to gemplemans. He hab 'spect [respect] for gemplemans. He hab 'spect for me, Tom. He shak' han' wid Tom. He say 'Tom, I yer [hear] 'bout you. You maussa is my frien'.' He's a lady, ebbry inch ob 'em. You mus' tak' he money, maussa, ef it's only to 'blige [oblige] 'em, and mak' 'em feel easy. Da's it!"

Frampton said not a word, but he rose during the captain's recital, came closer to him, and when he had finished his statement, grasped his hand and wrung it warmly. Millhouse, once more set free to speak, launched into the most superb eulogium on the virtues of the lady, which we need not report, concluding with the opinion that "sich a good woman, with sich a fortin, ought to have a guardeen out of the line of the army."

Porgy only looked at him, with half closed but flashing eye, then, as if speaking rather to himself than to his companions, he said musingly—

"And it is such a noble woman, that I was to select as the subject of a matrimonial speculation!"

"And who better?" quoth Millhouse. "She's the very sawt of pusson. There's no speckilating upon a poor pusson. Whar's the profit in it? And ef the pusson's rich, but happens to be mean and stingy, why, Lord! even the money ain't guine to

make it agreeable to hev' transactions with her. But when the woman has the good heart and the good fortin together, then it's a good speckilation. By thunder, cappin, now's the time to make a push into that market, and buy out the business. But I reckon you hev'n't been sleeping all the time you two was together."

"Sergeant Millhouse," said Porgy, with great composure, "you are no doubt, in some things, as shrewd and sensible a person as any I know, but I think there are a few subjects upon which you had better not expend your time and labor."

"Which on 'em, cappin? I'd like to know."

"I think, for example, that when you go to heaven, which I trust you will do some day—"

"Arter a time, cappin; but Lord love you, I ain't in any hurry to leave this airth."

"In your own time, sergeant; but when you do go, I think it will not be altogether proper to undertake to show the angels, Gabriel, Michael, Raphael, or any others with whom you may become familiar, in what way they ought to use their wings. I have no doubt you have some very wise notions as to how birds and beasts may fly; but the angels, perhaps, have more experience than you, if not more wisdom, and it will require that you should see much flying done among them, before you can venture to give them any lessons."

"Why, cappin, I reckon you're jest a-laughing at me now, out of the corner of your eye. I ain't sich a bloody fool as to do them things."

"Perhaps not! But when a man is so wise as you are on so many subjects, he is apt to think himself wise in all."

"Well, that's nateral and reasonable too, I'm a-thinking."

"Natural enough, no doubt, but not so certainly reasonable, my good fellow. If you were suddenly to find yourself among bears and buffaloes, you might reasonably undertake to show them how to find their food or prey; if among snakes, I have no doubt you could teach them superior modes of beguiling young frogs into their jaws; as a dweller among hawks and owls, or minks and weasels, you might open new views to them of the processes by which they might empty all the hen-houses in the country; and, teaching squirrels, they might be grateful to you

for new lessons in the art of gathering corn out of the fields, and cracking hickory-nuts;—but I doubt if these capacities of yours should entitle you to think yourself appointed to teach young oysters how to swim, or young angels how to fly; and I am even doubtful how far they should justify you in an endeavor to set yourself up as a teacher of love and courtship. Of one thing let me assure you, before I stop, that if ever you undertake to make love to any woman on my account, again, and in my presence, by the Lord that liveth, sergeant, I will fling you from the windows, though the house were as high as the tower of Babel. Be warned in season;—and now let us have a sup of Jamaica, before sleeping for the night."

"I told you so,—" said Frampton, brushing by the sergeant as the latter stood up, in silence, to drink with his superior.

"Well, thar's no *on*derstanding it," muttered the sergeant, after the captain had retired. "Thar's some people so cross-grained in the world, they won't let you make 'em smooth."

Tom, the cook, had his comment also.

"Hah! mass Millhouse, you yer! Look out! when mausa talk so, he's in dead airnest! Ef he tell you he guine fling you out de window, he do 'em for true. And you know, for all you see 'em look and walk so lazy, he strong as a harricane when he git in a passion. He will, sure as a gun, brek' you neck out de window, ef he promise!"

"Thar's no onderstanding it!" was the only response of the sergeant to those suggestions. "And all the time I was a-doing the best,—jest a making his wheel run smooth!"

CHAPTER L.

THE BACHELOR'S EMBARRASSMENTS.

We must suppose an interval of several weeks since the occurrences of the last chapter. Meanwhile, Captain Porgy, charged with his letters of credit and introduction, has visited Charleston; has obtained the five hundred guineas of the widow; has executed to her a mortgage of all his negroes, with the exception of Tom; has procured and sent to the plantation all necessary supplies; has conferred upon the state of his affairs with Charles Cotesworth Pinckney; has received his counsel; has endeavored, but in vain, to see his creditor, M'Kewn, who was absent from the city, no one knew where; and has returned to his plantation, where he has ever since remained.

During this period his subordinates have not been idle; but have proceeded, with proper energy, to the prosecution of affairs at home. Millhouse, in his capacity as overseer, and Lance Frampton, as a temporary assistant, have stripped to their tasks and done wonders. The lands have been broken up for planting; the negro-houses have been run up as if by magic; rails have been split, and fences raised; and the usual labors of several months have been compressed into as many weeks. The negroes, glad once more to find themselves in possession of a homestead, certain provisions, and the protection of a white man, have worked with a hearty will and cheerfulness which have amply made up for lost time. If Millhouse was vain of his prowess as an overseer, he was not without good reasons for his vanity. He himself thought it a merit to be boastful.

"I likes to hear a man brag," said he, "of what he kin do; for then, of he aint about the meanest skunk in all creation, he must be a-doing, and a-doing well, to carry a decent face among white people. Wanity is a wartue when it makes a fellow work."

And this philosophy Captain Porgy did not dispute.

Lance Frampton took special charge of the buildings,—saw to and assisted at the erection of the stables; did all the birding and squirrel shooting; prepared lines for fishing; and, with so much success did he pursue his field-sports, that it was very rare indeed that the family went without fresh meat for dinner. In these pursuits, Captain Porgy took sufficient part. Squirrels were bagged in abundance; once or twice, hunting with Arthur Eveleigh's hounds, a stout buck was tumbled in his track, and, on one occasion, a brown bear was badgered in the swamps with so much ingenuity, that he finally rendered up his hide in return for a few charges of rifle bullets and gunpowder. Young Eveleigh found his new associates at Glen-Eberley particularly good company, and was hunting, or birding, with Porgy or Frampton, or both, every other day in the week. At his coming, always, the sergeant could be heard to whistle with exultation; be seen to loll out his tongue as if in the enjoyment of a sweet morsel, and to wave his one arm abroad, as if grasping some very enviable possession. Sometimes he ventured to mutter, in Porgy's hearing, the hopes which were still active in him, in phrases peculiar to himself;—as for example—

"The poor young fellow feels the want of a pappy! It's a sad needcessity, ef so be he kaint find the right one. But his nose p'ints out the right way. He looks straight to the line of the army. Well! I wont say much;—but what's to be will be. The Lord's over all, and he'll bring all things straight in time."

Porgy, at such speeches, would give him a look of warning, which usually arrested his eloquence before it broke bounds.

Meanwhile, the visits were not all on one side. Porgy rode over to the widow's, on an average twice a week, dining there usually when he went. He did not ask the companionship of his followers, on such occasions, nor did they receive any more invitations from the lady. Millhouse was content. If he was not to be permitted to assist in the courtship, he was quite willing to be absent from the scene of it. He would sometimes mutter his apprehensions to Frampton, that things did not advance with sufficient rapidity, and that his services would yet be needed. On which occasions, the lieutenant, reüttering what

had been said by Porgy, would suggest to the overseer, the propriety of his making an early call upon the arch-angels, Gabriel, Michael and Raphael, to see how they were getting on:—a suggestion that usually sent Millhouse to the right-about.

At the widow Eveleigh's, Porgy was received on the most friendly and familiar footing. He was well read, of contemplative mind, had been trained in good society, and, though somewhat wanting in the precision of the courtier, in consequence of the loose, free and easy manner which he had acquired in camp, he was yet capable of curbing himself, when the impulse strove within him; and this done, he could minister to the social tastes of his fair companion, with an ease, grace, and vivacity, that made him always a very grateful visiter. Mrs. Eveleigh was almost wholly free from affectations; was frank and ever gay of mood; always cheerful; always ingenuous, and never labored at the concealment of her sympathies. She laughed at the good things of the captain and freely pardoned his familiarities. There was a freshness and a saliency about his peculiar humor which pleased her, and when he chose to be serious, he could rise into provinces of thought, generalizing from the abstract to the familiar, and thus coupling the most remote affinities and associations, in a strain of expression at once graceful and expressive. He quickly discovered in what respects he could most successfully address her ear, and he naturally availed himself of his discovery. Porgy, before entering the army, was well read in Shakspere, Milton, Dryden, and the best of the then current English writers. It must be admitted, we fear, that he had also drank freely of fountains less undefiled; had dipped largely into the subsequent pages of the Wycherlys, the Vanbrughs, the Congreves, the Wilmots, Ethereges, and Rochesters, of a far less intellectual, and therefore less moral, period. But the taste of the latter had not spoiled him for the just appreciation of the former; had perhaps heightened his estimate of them by force of contrast; and the fruit of his familiarity with both classes of writers, was a knowledge, not then commonly possessed—scarcely now, indeed,—of materials for graceful conversation, illustrated with frequent happy quotations, which particularly commended him to a woman who was, herself, at once refined and intellectual. We can readily understand how interesting

was the intercourse between the parties, in a region which, sparsely settled, and wanting in books, left so many wearisome hours, and wanting moods, which no plantation employments could satisfy or supply.

We do not mean to say that the widow regarded Porgy in any other aspect than that of a very agreeable companion. But we are constrained to admit on behalf of the captain, that he soon became seriously interested in the widow. That he should respect her heart, and love it, because of the liberality she had shown him, was natural enough;—but when he came to know her mind; the sweet graces of her intellect; her quiet, gentle, always just and wholesome habit of thought; the pleasant animation of her fancies; the liveliness of her conversation, enriched by the anecdotes of a very large and varied experience, as well in England as America, he began to admire her on other grounds, so that frequent association with her became almost a necessity. Still, there was a something wanting to the perfect sway of the widow over her admirer; something which he felt, but could not explain, or account for, to himself. She was a fine-looking woman, "fair, fat, and forty,"—but he found himself occasionally objecting to "the fat." The very fact that he was, himself, too much so, was enough to make him quarrel with her possessions of the same sort. He asked himself repeatedly the question: "Do I—can I love this woman?—as a woman *ought* to be loved; as a man ought to love;—as she deserves to be loved by any husband, and especially by me?"

Millhouse, could he have heard this question, would have answered it without a moment's hesitation; but Porgy never broached the subject in his ears, and now, studiously, since the memorable dinner, checked every approach to it which the former made.

"Yet," quoth the soliloquizing captain, "am I not shaping this passion of love into a bug-bear for my own fright and disappointment? Does it need that either the widow or myself should experience all the paroxysms and fancies of eighteen, in order to feel secure of the force of our attachment. Is it natural or reasonable, that, at forty-five, I at least, should need, or expect, to recall my youthful frenzies, before venturing upon the married condition? Is not the sort of love which we require

now, that which belongs rather to the deliberate consent of the mind than the warm impulses of the blood and fancy? Is it necessary with us, that, in addition to the cool conviction of the thought, in favor of the propriety of this union, there should be a nervous and excitable upspringing in the heart, of tumultuous emotions, indefinable, intense, passionate, eager—which reject reason, which baffle thought, which seem to be guided rather by dreams than by right reason—and which ask none of the securities, by which thought would shelter faith—which is, in fact, a faith itself, beyond any of the help or the convictions of the understanding? My judgment is perfectly satisfied with the widow Eveleigh. She is vastly superior, as a lady—as a woman of sense and sweetness—grace and intelligence—to any that I know. She thinks well and kindly of me; that is evident. We harmonize admirably together. She listens with pleasure to my speech, and I am willing to listen gladly when she speaks in turn. She is a noble-looking woman—a little too stout, I admit—but of fine figure nevertheless, and a face that is at once sweet and commanding. She has wealth; but, by Jupiter, I reject that as a consideration. Her money shall not enter into the estimate. Her other attractions are surely quite sufficient. Yet, *are* they sufficient? *Am* I satisfied? Why do I ask myself so doubtingly whether I can bind myself to her, for life, and feel no lack, no deficiency—no weight in the bonds I carry?"

The captain ended the soliloquy with a sigh. He strode the chamber impatiently, and paused finally before the fireplace, in which the fire smouldered rather than gave forth light and heat. At that moment the form of the widow Griffin rose vividly before his eyes.

"Why is it?" he muttered to himself, "that, whenever I try to meditate this question of the widow Eveleigh, the image of Mrs. Griffin starts up before me. *She* is a fine woman undoubtedly; good, gentle, humble, affectionate; and has no doubt been very beautiful;—is still very sweet to look upon;—but she can not compare with the widow Eveleigh! She is not wise, not learned; is really very ignorant; has no manners, no eloquence; is simply humble and adhesive;—*she* is rather thin than stout, that is true, her figure is good;—she has still a face

of exquisite sweetness, but she is no associate for me;—she has no resources, no thoughts, no information; has seen nothing, knows nothing! They are not to be spoken of in the same moment. The widow Eveleigh is far superior in *all* but simply personal respects! Yet, Griffin does move about with a delightful grace; so soft, so modest. In household affairs she is admirable. I don't know that I ever saw Mrs. Eveleigh attending to household affairs at all. Her servants are numerous and well trained. She has only to command. Yet, on a small scale, considering her inadequate resources, it is wonderful with what skill Griffin manages; with how little noise, how little effort. Poor woman, what a lonesome life she leads. It is abominable that I have only been to see her once since I have been from town. I will certainly ride over to-morrow."

And he did so; and he dined with Mrs. Griffin; and a very nice extempore dinner did she give him. There were some cold oaked meats; there was a beautiful broiled steak, a stripe from a quarter of beef which she had received as a present the day before from Mrs. Eveleigh; the breadstuffs of Mrs. Griffin were inimitable; her butter was the best in the parish, and a cool draught of her buttermilk, fresh from the churn, was welcomed by Porgy with all the enthusiasm of a citizen escaping, for the first time, from dusty walks and walls, to the elysium of green fields and forest shelter.

Notions of arcadian felicity crept into Porgy's mind. Everything seemed perfect, and perfectly delightful about the humble cottage of the widow Griffin. The trees had a fresher look; the grounds seemed to shelter the most seductive recesses; even the dog lying down in the piazza, and the cow ruminating under the old Pride of India before the door, seemed to enjoy dreams of a happier sort than usually come to dog and cow in ordinary life. The skies above the cottage appeared to wear looks of superior mildness and beauty, and to impart a something kindred to the looks of the beings who dwelt under their favoring auspices. What a sweet, smiling, modest creature was Ellen Griffin, whom our Lieutenant Frampton was shortly to take to his bosom. And how like her still—how nearly as youthful—how quite as meek, and gentle, and devoted—was the mother.

Porgy was delighted with the part of the day spent with this

little family. His incertitude, in matrimonial respects, increased the more he surveyed her. Griffin made her impressions, differing much from those of the widow Eveleigh, but in their way not less strong; perhaps, stronger, since it was certain that Captain Porgy showed himself much more at ease with the one lady than the other. There was no doubt, indeed, that the superior social position of Mrs. Eveleigh, her equal grace and dignity of bearing, the calm, natural manner with which she met his approaches, all joined, in some degree, to restrain our hero — to lessen, somewhat, his own ease; to make him less assured on the subject of his own dignity. He was sometimes warned by the lady, that the *brusquerie* of his army habits, would not altogether answer — that he must be on the watch against himself, to check his involuntary *escapades*, and never to be forgetful of the fact that the time had come when, to play somewhat with the language of the poet — "arms must give way to the *gown*!"

It was this feeling of constraint which chiefly qualified the pleasure of his intercourse with the widow Eveleigh; which made him hesitate to give her the preference; and which, on the other hand, assisted to increase the favorable impressions which a previous association had given him of the fair widow Griffin. With her, easily awed, conscious of social inferiority, looking up with great reverence to the captain of partisans, as her late husband's superior, he felt under few restraints of mere language and deportment. He did not dare to swear in the presence of Mrs. Eveleigh; that would have been a terrible violation of the rules of good society in that day. Yet our captain had an infirmity of this sort, and so inveterate was his habit, that he had only been able to check himself, at times, when in the widow's presence, by arresting the unlucky oath upon his lips by a manual operation; by clapping his broad palm entirely over his own mouth. Now, he did not feel the same sort of necessity when in the presence of the widow Griffin. Her social standards were less exacting. Her social experiences were more adapted to his own later habits, and the feeling of ease which he enjoyed in her presence, was such, that, without deliberately weighing the claims of the two ladies against each other, he rated it as a something almost compensative for the surrender of the graceful, in-

tellectual attractions of the wealthy widow. He could smoke his pipe in the presence of the widow Griffin, which he had not dared to do at Mrs. Eveleigh's. The former when he had dined with her, filled his pipe, herself, from a store of tobacco which might have been a hoard of her late husband, and dropped, with her own hands, the little coal of fire, from the tongs, into it. It was like a coal from the altars of Cupid, upon the heart of the partisan; and while he sat in the piazza, after dinner, his chair resting solely on its hind legs, his own thrown over the bannisters, his head thrown back, at a declination almost the proper one for sleep, and sent up cloud after cloud, by way of tribute to the heavens, his half-shut eyes watched with a growing sense of the grace and beauties of the widow, her gliding and unobtrusive figure, as she busied herself about the hall and table; assisted Ellen to move the table back, brushed up her hearth with a fairy-like besom of broom straw, and finally drew her knitting to the doorway, and sat down in silent and submissive companionship. Porgy mused and said to himself:—

"One does not want an equal, but an ally in marriage. A man ought to be wise enough for his wife and himself. To get a woman who shall best comprehend one is the sufficient secret; and no woman can properly comprehend her husband, who is not prepared to recognise his full superiority. When it is otherwise, there are constant disputes. The woman is for ever setting up for herself. She is not only unwilling that you should be her master, but she sets up to be your mistress. Why, if she has the mind, should she not use it; and if she has mind enough for the household, what's the use of yours? Clearly, there can not be peace in any planet which acknowledges two masters."

How long the pleasant surveys and soliloquies of the captain might have continued, it is not possible to say. They were interrupted by the sudden riding up of Mr. Fordham, the overseer of Mrs. Eveleigh. He made a respectful bow to the captain, taking off his hat, and offering his hand as he did so; and entered the house, shaking hands with the widow and daughter with all the frankness of an old acquaintance. After a while, the captain's horse was brought out, Fordham volunteering to do the service. Porgy left the overseer behind him. As he rode off, the thought suddenly occurred to him—

"Can it be possible that this fellow, Fordham, is thinking of the widow?—Humph!"

And the suggestion led to a prolonged fit of musing which was only arrested when he found himself within his own avenue.

CHAPTER LI.

DEBTOR AND CREDITOR.

The next day Porgy rode over to see the wife of the squatter, from whom he had received a supply of stockings, and some cloth of her own and daughter's weaving. It was fortunate that he did not suffer Millhouse to know that he dropped three guineas into the hands of little Dory when one would have sufficed for payment. He gave other commissions to the humble family, and noted with pleasure the improvements and acquisitions in the little household, the fruits of his own liberality and that of Mrs. Eveleigh. While sitting in the porch of the hovel, with Dory quietly nestling in his lap, he was surprised to see the widow and her son ride up on horseback. Of course, the interview was a pleasant one all round, though our captain felt a little awkward, at the first blush, when caught in his paternal relation with the little girl. She, too, by some strange instinct, started up at the coming of the new visiters and retreated to the side of her mother.

"I had a call yesterday, captain," said Mrs. Eveleigh, "from Mr. M'Kewn. You have heard that he is now a resident at the plantation adjoining me, which he owns. He is making the rounds of the neighborhood, and you may soon look to see him, I suppose."

"Too soon, I fear," answered the captain, looking disquieted.

"Well," said she, "we must hope for the best.—If I could recover that box—" she added, half to herself, but here she stopped, and the captain could only look curious.

"You have heard nothing of your husband yet. Mrs. Bostwick?' asked the widow of the poor woman.

"Not a word, ma'am, and I don't know what to think. I'm dub'ous something's happened to him."

To this the widow said nothing. After a pause, however, she proceeded to give a commission for a quantity of homespun cloth, and concluded with asking that Dory might go home and spend a week with her. Dory looked earnestly toward her mother, and the latter, with eyes filling, and with some reluctance in her manner, gave her consent that she should go over the next day. Porgy accompanied the widow and her son, when they took their departure, though he did not attend them home. He was quite too full of serious thoughts, which naturally came up with the statement made respecting M'Kewn. He *had* heard of that person's arrival in the neighborhood; but the sympathizing manner of the widow was calculated to impress him more seriously than his own thoughts, in respect to the legal relations in which he stood with the Scotchman, and the danger with which he might expect very soon to be threatened. This danger he well knew could not long be evaded. The trial of strength must soon come on, and when he reflected upon those suspicions in regard to M'Kewn, which the remarks of Mrs. Eveleigh had imparted to his mind, upon the facts in connection with the abduction of his slaves, and her conjectures in respect to the share which M'Kewn had taken in the affair, he felt very much like making the conflict a personal one. Our partisan would greatly have relished any circumstances which would authorize a transfer of the proceedings from the courts of law to those of arms. But we need not anticipate his reflections, particularly as we shall soon hear from his own lips, what are his feelings and resolves in the matter.

The very next day M'Kewn made his appearance at Glen-Eberley. Porgy was alone in his piazza, as the former rode up the avenue. Millhouse, was somewhere in the rice-fields; Lance Frampton had ridden over to see Ellen Griffin, his marriage with whom was very shortly to take place; and, except Tom, the cook, and Pomp, the fiddler, there was no one present to witness the interview between the parties. Porgy had been smoking, and the pipe was still in his mouth as M'Kewn came in sight. As soon as he was recognised by our partisan, the latter betrayed his emotions by a single movement, which, taking the pipe from

his mouth, shivered it over the railing of the piazza. This done, he remained comparatively cool; at all events he preserved his external composure. Pomp took the horse of the visiter, who, at once, in a free and easy way, ascended to where Porgy still maintained his seat. As he reached the floor, the latter rose, and with calm and courtly gravity, said:—

"Mr. M'Kewn, I believe."

"At your service, captain. I'm very glad to see you safe, sir, after the war. It's a long time since I've had the pleasure of seeing you."

"Pleasure!" quoth Porgy — then motioning to a chair — "take a seat, sir."

The Scotchman accepted the reluctant invitation, laid his hat down beside him, drew off his gloves, rubbed his hands, and looked about him with the air of a man resolved on putting himself on the easiest possible terms with his host. Porgy looked on with the stern calmness of one who compels himself to submit, with as much composure as possible, to an unpleasant necessity which he sees not well how to escape. His visiter, meanwhile, began with a repetition of his congratulations; that the war was over, that the country had achieved its independence, that old friends were safe, that old associations were to be renewed, and so forth. Porgy heard him for a while in silence and great gravity of aspect, until getting weary and impatient of the commonplace preliminaries which the other had employed, he himself broke ground in relation to the only subject of real interest between the parties.

"To make a long story short, Mr. M'Kewn, I owe you a considerable amount of money, which, no doubt, you desire should be paid."

"Very true, captain, a very considerable amount indeed, out of which I have been lying for several years, and which I certainly am very much in need of."

"You are secured I think, sir, however, by bond and mortgage?"

"Secured, sir? No, indeed! My mortgage covers the lands of Glen-Eberley, but if these were all sold to-morrow, at present prices, they wouldn't pay one half of the debt for which they

are bound. And you know, sir, there is a considerable unliquidated debt besides, sir; some thousand pounds, sir—"

"Ah! yes! Well, Mr. M'Kewn, you certainly do not expect that I should have any money so soon after the war. You sufficiently appreciate the patriotism which called us into the field and kept us in the ranks for so many years, without any compensation."

"True, sir, true! Nobody honors more than I do the patriotism that achieved our independence; but, sir, it is not for a single person like myself to do more than his share in such a conflict. I have made a great many sacrifices, and lost a great deal myself in the cause; and you will admit that a credit of more than five years—"

"Is no credit at all, sir, under the present circumstances, unless, perhaps, continued for as many years more."

"Oh! that is quite impossible, Captain Porgy. I am greatly in want of money, now. Buying this plantation and negroes, it has stripped me quite and left me considerably in debt myself."

"I don't see how I am to help you. You can not possibly suppose that I have any money."

"Well, captain, I don't know," was the answer, with a significant smile. "Report says that you have money, and in considerable amount. You have been purchasing largely in the city—and the rumor is——" here a pause, and an increased significance of smile.

"Well, sir, what of rumor?"

"Why, sir, the rumor goes, that Captain Porgy, returning from the field of Mars with laurels, has been welcomed to those of Love, and—"

"Stop, sir!—Mr. M'Kewn, I am willing that you should repeat what rumor may have reported, but I must warn you by no means to attempt any invention of your own."

"Inventions, sir!" And M'Kewn looked a little angrily—"I have no invention, Captain Porgy. I only state what others have said to me, or in my hearing."

"Well, sir; confine yourself to that, if you please."

"It is briefly said, Captain Porgy. The rumor is, that a certain wealthy widow of this neighborhood is prepared to honor the laurels of the soldier, and supply all his deficiencies of fortune—"

"Enough, Mr. M'Kewn," said Porgy, arresting him — with a stern aspect, and warning finger uplifted. "You have said what you have heard, I suppose, and now hear what I say. If, hereafter, I hear any man repeating this story, I shall slit his tongue for him. The lady in question is one whom I greatly honor, and of whom I will not hear anybody speak in disparagement. There was that in your tone and manner, Mr. M'Kewn, just now, which I did not relish. Be pleased to take warning."

M'Kewn was somewhat taken aback, but recovering himself, he said —

"I do not know, Captain Porgy, why I should take warning in particular. I am hardly apprehensive that anybody will slit my tongue for anything I say, though I am not the man to give any provocation to violence on the part of anybody. Let me add, sir, that I see no harm in the report which I mentioned — no harm, certainly, in saying that a certain brave officer of our armies has been distinguished by the favor of a certain lovely and wealthy widow of our county."

"There is harm, sir, because there is great indelicacy and great injustice in it. I am the proper authority in this matter, and I tell you, sir, in answer to this rumor, that the intercourse between Mrs. Eveleigh and myself is that simply of friendship, occasioned perhaps, wholly, by a service which I had the good fortune to render."

"Well, but, captain, there is no good reason why friendship, in such a case, should not ripen into —"

"No more, sir! The subject is one upon which I can suffer no jesting. That upon which we have to speak simply concerns money. I owe you money; — you want your money you say."

"I do sir; I have been kept out of it long enough, Captain Porgy."

"Do you mean to intimate, sir, that I have perversely and willingly kept you out of your money?"

"I state nothing, sir, but the absolute fact, that the money is due me, has been due too long, and that I certainly expect it to be paid, and paid very soon."

"Very good, sir! Such then is your expectation. Now, sir hear me. I shall expect from you a full statement of our accounts, with all items of charge particularly stated."

"Why, sir, you've had the accounts rendered you in full, six years ago."

"No, sir; such is not the case. It is true, I was improvident enough not to demand them, and to take your summary statements when I should have had a full bill of particulars. I require them now, sir."

"In the case of the bond and mortgage, sir, the requisition need not be answered. That is a liquidated claim, acknowledged under seal, and, sir, according to law—"

"You are something of a lawyer, I perceive, Mr. M'Kewn, and I claim to know nothing about law. Still, I have some hope of justice, and, in the case of bond given and mortgage sealed and signed, under circumstances of error or fraud——"

"Do you mean to impute fraud to me, Captain Porgy?" demanded M'Kewn with some fierceness of aspect.

"And if I did, sir, do you suppose I should value a fig your hectoring looks? Keep your temper within bounds, Mr. M'Kewn; for you would try to bully me in vain; and to let you understand this more fully, let me tell you that I *do* impute fraud to you—"

"Ha!" rising from his seat.

"Yes, sir! I think you at once a great and a little rascal. Since you demand my opinion, you shall have it. I believe you have cheated me in these accounts, for the satisfaction of which, in my blind confidence and folly, I gave you a lien upon my property. I shall require a thorough overhauling of your accounts, from the beginning, sir, and fancy that I shall be able to find, in some process of law, a means by which to arrive at the awards of justice!"

"Very well, sir; very well, sir," gathering up hat and gloves --and shaking them in both hands with nervous fury—"If it's law you want, sir, you shall have it. You shall have enough to remember it all your life."

And he wheeled about to descend the steps. Here he encountered Millhouse, at whose back stood Tom, the cook, and Pomp the fiddler.

"Say the word, cappin." quoth Millhouse, "and I'll give the fellow a h'ist."

"Say de wud, maussa; da's all," echoed Tom, his sleeves

already rolled up; while Pomp threw himself into an attitude, claws extended as if about to grapple with a bear. M'Kewn looked at the enemies in his path, and drew up with recovering dignity.

"Am I to be assaulted in your house, Captain Porgy?"

"Let him go, Millhouse! Let him pass."

The three made way for him, reluctantly, Millhouse muttering—

"I feel mighty *on*pleasant at parting with the critter, without giving him jest one squeeze!—I reckon that's the fellow they calls M'Kewn."

The creditor, by this time, was on horseback. He looked back with gleaming eyes upon the group, then dashed up the avenue at full gallop.

"It's cl'ar, cappin, that the war's declared atween you!"

"Yes, Millhouse, and the army-chest nearly empty."

"Well, we'll do the fighting all for love; eh, Tom!"

"Hah! da's jist de way for fight, kaise you lubs it! But how you guine fight? Da' bucrah ain't de sawt of pusson to lub yer [hear] de bullet whistle."

"Ah! Tom! there's not the sort of fighting that he intends. He makes the sheriff do his fighting. Do you remember what I told you about the sheriff?"

"Enty, I 'member, maussa? He's a warmint, you bin tell me!"

"Yes, indeed, and now, how to keep you all from falling into his clutches."

A long consultation followed between the captain and sergeant, to which Tom occasionally contributed a characteristic suggestion. Lance Frampton returned at night to share in the discussion. Neither of the parties, however, could throw much light upon the difficulty which embarrassed them, and Captain Porgy, while he reflected, felt that he had perhaps brought on the conflict of strength rather prematurely, and that prudence should have prompted more forbearance; but whenever he recalled the references made by M'Kewn to the widow Eveleigh, he became reconciled to his own rashness.

"No! d—n the fellow! whatever happens I shall never regret what I said to him. Better break at once with such a scoun

drel, than have him perpetually about you; now fawning, now threatening; always vexing your soul, and, whatever the delay, destroying you at last. I can face all the evil that he threatens with a stout heart, but can't, with any heart of contentment, suffer him to face me with his scoundrel countenance!"

CHAPTER LII.

THE RANDOM SHAFT.

The news soon got abroad of what had taken place at Glen Eberley, between its proprietor and creditor. M'Kewn's own rage forced him to tell the story to various persons, and Millhouse conveyed the substance of it to Fordham, the very night that it took place. The two overseers had met that night, in the basement of the dwelling at Glen-Eberley; Millhouse having taken one of the lower rooms to himself, while that adjoining had been assigned to Frampton. Porgy was suffered to live in loftier state, above stairs, to himself. The parties met always at the same table in the dining-room, and would sit together usually of an evening; but Millhouse had his own circle, of whom Fordham was one, whom he received only in his own domain. The two overseers went over together the whole history of the relations of our partisan with M'Kewn, as far as they knew it, and discussed with some anxiety the modes of escape for their superior from so voracious a person. It need not be stated here; that the united wisdom of the two was scarcely of a sort to help them very greatly in the encounter with the difficulty. The substance of all Fordham learned was conveyed the next day to Mrs. Eveleigh, whose interest in the affairs of Captain Porgy was no secret to him. He, himself, felt a great sympathy for our partisan, and found it impossible to avoid talking over the matter, and meditating the modes of escape. Of course the widow saw at a glance, that none of the suggestions of her overseer or of the captain's, could avail for any useful purpose The next day she wrote a note to Porgy, requesting him to visit her; a summons which he promptly obeyed. Her son, Arthur,

brought the invitation and the captain accompanied him on his return.

The two, however widely removed by years and experience had become pretty close intimates, and Arthur had learned to relish the eccentricities of his senior, particularly as he always found something in his conversation which sensibly compelled his thoughts in a novel direction. Porgy loved the society of the young and framed his conversation to suit their tastes and impulses. He was playful as well as thoughtful, could happily unite the playful with the thoughtful, as is the case usually with the contemplative mind; and, what with narratives of the stirring events of the army, anecdotes of persons and performances, a lively satirical vein, and a frank humor, he contrived, without much effort, to make himself highly attractive to the youth, who frequently rode over to Glen-Eberley to sit, as well as *bird* with him, and who, for a time, became quite enthusiastic in his admiration of the partisan. He frequently amused his mother with a recital of the subject-matter of conversation between them, and learned to repeat the good things of the captain, as if they were his own.

Porgy, who liked the grace and spirit of the youth, was pleased with the admiration which he displayed, and was at some pains to secure it. Arthur possessed a pair of foils, left by his father; Porgy gave him lessons in fencing, and was equally delighted with his rapidity of improvement, and the grace and ease of his address in swordmanship. In brief, the veteran and the youth were on terms of the most cordial intimacy; and the latter, as soon as he heard the particulars, became, of course, deeply concerned in the legal embarrassments of the former. We need not say that he could give no help by his counsels in the matter, though he rather inclined to the opinion of Millhouse that the better method was to contrive some way of fighting through the difficulty, and it was with a modest earnestness that he whispered to the overseer his perfect willingness to serve as a volunteer in any expedition which should contemplate this method of squaring accounts with Porgy's creditor.

He listened with curious interest, and possibly some dissatisfaction, when he heard his mother gravely rebuke the captain for suffering himself to get angry with M'Kewn.

"You ought to have conciliated him as far as possible. Your policy should be to gain time. There is none in precipitating the event. Doubtless, you had provocation, but—"

"Very great!" muttered Porgy, but he could not venture to tell her that she herself had been the subject.

"We must still gain time, captain — gain as much as possible. There are now no courts in session. There will be none till the fall. I don't know much of business, but I suppose M'Kewn can scarcely proceed till then—"

"I don't know that," said Porgy. "I know very little of the law, but I believe there are certain processes which, even before judgment, will enable a creditor to bind or seize a debtor's property."

"We must consult with Pinckney. In the meantime, there is a matter which concerns this person M'Kewn, in connection with both of us, which, perhaps, ought to be known to you, though, as affairs at present show themselves, I do not see that the possession of my statement merely, will be of any avail to your relief."

She proceeded to tell of the papers which she had appropriated from the desk of Moncrieff, but suddenly arrested herself to say to her son—

"Arthur, remember, this matter must not be whispered by you to anybody. It may do mischief if repeated, particularly under impulse or excitement, and without the means to prove what I say."

She then went on to speak of the missing box, and manuscripts, and to describe the contents of the latter, giving particulars, of which we are already in possession. Porgy saw at once the importance of the statement could the writings be recovered.

"My dear widow," said he, "could we recover the papers, and prove this fellow's handwriting, which I could do easily, we should have him at our mercy."

"This was the opinion of Mr. Parsons; it is also the opinion of Colonel Pinckney. I have consulted both; and but for the unfortunate loss of that box—"

"It must be found. I will find it," cried Porgy.—"That fellow Bostwick must be forthcoming."

"Has nothing been heard of him?"

"Nothing for two months. I have sworn to hang him to the first tree, should I lay hands on him, if only for the benefit of his wife and children."

"Stay!" said Mrs. Eveleigh, putting her finger on her lips, "here comes little Dory."

And the little girl came into the piazza at the moment, and entered the hall, passing promptly forward to the captain, and putting her little white hand into his. He looked at her with surprise. Such a change as a few days had wrought in her appearance. She was newly clad, in better quality of clothes, made in better style. It was Cinderella, the drudge, converted by fairy hands, into Cinderella the princess. The little thing, beautiful in all her obscurity, was singularly so, emerged from the cloud. She smiled consciously, as she saw the captain perusing the change. He kissed her between the eyes, and with a bound she darted away.

Scarcely had she gone when Arthur Eveleigh showed himself a little restiff. In a few moments he disappeared also, leaving the captain and his mother to conclude their conference without witnesses. It is not our one to pursue it further. Enough that Porgy left the widow with the increasing conviction that he was destined, in some way, to owe his safety and relief to her. They had agreed upon certain matters together. They were both to write to Colonel Pinckney, while Porgy was to renew his efforts at recovering the missing box. When Arthur Eveleigh returned to the house which he had left, on some pretext of looking after dogs and birds, he seemed a little disappointed that Porgy was gone, and at once resolved to ride after him. But he gave up the resolution in a moment after, and contented himself with taking up his rifle, calling up one of his squirrel dogs, and setting forth on a tramp into the pine woods.

His route led him directly down the avenue leading to the high road. He had scarcely emerged into this, before he encountered, on horseback, the very person of whose secret scoundrelism he had heard so much said only an hour before. M'Kewn, the Scotchman, was making his way directly toward the widow's. Arthur would have avoided him, by burying himself in the woods, but it was too late to escape unseen, and M'Kewn seemed

determined to prevent it. He saw, in the aspect of the young man, the prejudices and suspicions of the mother. His policy was to disarm them both. We have seen that he had already called upon the widow. The rifle on the lad's shoulder, and the dog beside him, at once afforded him a clew by which to conciliate the son.

"Good morning, master Arthur," said he, as he approached "good morning. You are for a squirrel-hunt, I perceive. Well, if you will take my woods you will find them in greater abundance than in any other part of the country. I do believe my fox-squirrels are the most magnificent of size that can be found anywhere. One of them can easily eat up half a dozen ears of corn at a sitting. Do me the favor to hunt them up and make as familiar acquaintance with them as possible. My grounds are always free to you, and you will find them full of other game. If you want a deer-hunt at any time, let me hear the night before, and I will secure you a shot; and, as for doves and partridges, you can scarcely skirt the fields anywhere without stumbling over them."

Arthur thanked him, but received the overture with coldness.

"Your mother's at home, I suppose. I see she has recently had a visiter."

Here he smiled significantly, looking up the road. The youth bowed.

"Captain Porgy is a frequent visiter at your house."

"Yes, sir; he comes sometimes, and we are always glad to see him."

"I suppose so,—I suppose so; the captain is no doubt a great gallant—most military men are. The ladies usually find them invincible. But the wars are now over, master Arthur, and the gown they tell us, when that is the case, soon gets the better of the sword. It is the captain's misfortune that he does not sufficiently credit this fact. I barely reminded him of the fact that he owed me a certain and very considerable debt, and he was for fighting me on the spot. Ha! ha! what do you think of such a mode of settling a debt?"

Arthur only looked at his rifle but said nothing.

"You say your mother's at home, master Arthur?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I am about to visit her. I will not carry you back with me, knowing you had much rather be at better sport. But see to my fox-squirrels, will you, and remember, whenever you would have a crack at a buck, I can certainly give you one always."

The youth again thanked him, and hurried into the woods. M'Kown looked after him as he disappeared, and muttered—"The cub has had his warning. They are all against me. But!—" and he gave his horse the spur, and was soon cantering up the avenue to the widow's dwelling. She received him very civilly, and after a few preliminary flourishes, he began—

"I have called to see you, Mrs. Eveleigh, as a neighbor whom I very much respect, in order that your mind may not be abused by anything that you may have heard respecting a late affair with Captain Porgy. I believe, my dear madam, I have as much desire to keep on good terms with my neighbors, as anybody in the country, and, I am sure, if there be any difference between us, the fault is not likely to be mine. You must know, Mrs. Eveleigh, that I am, and for years have been, a large creditor of the captain, and I hold a mortgage upon his lands. But this mortgage does not half secure me, and I called upon the captain, intending only to ask him for additional securities, when he fell into a passion with me, without any sort of provocation, imputed fraud to me, and I know not what, and so we parted. Now, as you may hear of this matter, from other sources, I wish to put you in the right as to the particulars. I have too much desire of your good opinion to be willing that you should hear of the affair from anybody but myself, and I am anxious to assure you that, as a new-comer into the neighborhood, it is neither my policy nor my wish to have any quarrel with anybody."

He said a great deal more than this, all in the most conciliatory vein. He had his own objects in keeping on good terms, especially with the widow, and in fact he was glad of any occasion which would justify his frequent visits. He was a bachelor and she was a fine woman, having a fine fortune. But, apart from this, he still entertained some lurking apprehensions that he might be somewhat in her power. Thinking that she had possessed herself of the missing papers between himself and Moncrieff, yet not quite sure that Bostwick had obtained them, there was

a lurking anxiety which troubled him and made him quite solicitous to make the most favorable impression upon her.

M'Kewn was a hard but not ill-looking man, and he had seen enough of good society to carry himself fairly in the presence of the sex. We must not forget to mention that everything about him was in the first style of fashion. He wore the best clothes, and did not stint himself in decorations of his person. His fingers shone with rings. A large jewel blazed in the pin which secured the ruffles of his shirt. The frills at his wrist were of the finest lace. His boots would have satisfied the Bond or Broad street dandy; the equipment of his horse would have won admiration on the race-course; and all his domestic arrangements contemplated the best defined standards of the existing fashions. M'Kewn was emulous of the best social position, and, so far as money might be expected to secure it for him, it was used without stint or limit. The lady heard him with quiet composure to the end.

"I thank you for your complimentary wishes in regard to myself, but I should prefer not to be required to sit in judgment on this difficulty between yourself and Captain Porgy."

"Ah! madam, but that I have reason to know that the captain has been beforehand with me in his revelations, and the fear that you might be prejudiced in the matter—"

"Even if this were the case," said the lady, "I do not see, Mr. M'Kewn, how the matter will affect the interests of either of you."

"Ah! madam, I am not unaware of the interest which you have taken in the captain's affairs. I am not ignorant that it is to you, and your friendly loans, that he owes the restoration of his establishment,—and—"

"This, Mr. M'Kewn, it appears to me, is a business which need not provoke the concern of any third person."

"I beg pardon, madam;—you are right—I simply stated what was the notorious fact."

"It is one of those facts, sir, in respect to which there has been no privacy. Captain Porgy was in want of money, and I had money to lend. I lent him money on good security. I have a mortgage on all his negroes."

"But," with a smile, "that mortgage will scarcely cover them

all. At present prices, five hundred guineas will scarcely buy twenty-five negroes, or the half of them."

M'Kewn had evidently been a shrewd inquirer into the affairs of the parties.

"Perhaps not, sir, and that is not the idea I mean to convey. It is enough that my loan is quite secure in order to justify me in making it, though I am not aware that my conduct in the transaction needs any justification."

"By no means, madam; do not suppose me guilty of any intention to convey such an idea."

The lady proceeded.

"One word, Mr. M'Kewn. Captain Porgy is a gentleman by birth and education, who has been doing good service to his country, for several years, without pay or reward, and to the grievous injury of his own fortune. It seems to me that he deserves every indulgence that can be accorded him by those who are grateful to Heaven for those blessings of independence which he has helped to win. I am at a loss to see what motive there can be for urging him to a satisfaction of these debts which can only be paid now by the entire sacrifice of his property.

"I understand you, madam; and I may say that I should have been pleased to indulge Captain Porgy, but he is a person who won't let you serve him; and when he insolently called my honor in question, he determined me to give him no indulgence. In brief, Mrs. Eveleigh, Captain Porgy is, with all his education, a mere ruffian, a coarse brutal soldier, who thinks to carry it with violence and a high hand against the laws. But he shall see. His personal insolence to me, madam, is beyond forgiveness."

"Really, Mr. M'Kewn, I do not understand you. Am I to understand that your mode of resenting a personal indignity is to clothe yourself with the terrors of the creditor, instead of—"

The lady paused. She felt that, in uttering this sarcasm, she had gone too far; she was doing mischief to the cause which she wished to help; and that her policy, on the part of Porgy, and as she had been counselling him, ought to be conciliatory only. She was conscious of error on other grounds. She had suffered local associations, and the current practice of the times to usurp place in her judgment, at the expense of her religion. She was

tacitly exhorting or goading the creditor to resort for his redress to the duello. She stopped herself suddenly, and apologized—

"Pardon me, Mr. M'Kewn, I am wrong. I did not mean this. Perhaps you are quite right in the assertion of your claims by established legal methods. That I should have thought, or suggested otherwise, only shows that the subject is one that should not properly concern me. Let me simply repeat the wish, that you should accord as much favor to a brave man,—not a ruffian, sir,—one whom, perhaps, you have somewhat ruffled,—as may be consistent with your interests. It will do you no hurt, but rather much good in the neighborhood, if you forbear as long as possible toward one who is such a general favorite."

"Nay, madam. One who is evidently a *particular* favorite," he answered with a sneering smile. The cheeks of the lady flushed and her eyes flashed fiercely.

"I am hardly prepared to understand you, Mr. M'Kewn, though it is evident from your looks and manner, that you designed something very sarcastic and offensive—"

"By no means, Mrs. Eveleigh—"

"Let me say, sir, by way of protecting myself, that I have been a soldier's wife; and I have learned some lessons from his feelings and opinions, which I may not advocate, or argue, or defend in any way, but the force of which I acknowledge, and the laws of which I obey. I am a woman, sir, it is true; but if it needs, for the assertion of my womanly dignity, that I should lift the weapon of the man, I shall feel no womanly fears in doing so. If you have any scruples, sir, in resenting personal indignities as men are apt to do, I have none; and though I have many friends, sir, who would cheerfully do battle in my cause, I would not suffer one of them to incur any peril of life or limb, while I am able to stand and confront the insolent, myself. I trust you understand me. Here, if you please, our conference must end."

She had risen when these things were to be said, and M'Kewn had risen also. Her tall and portly form, her commanding attitude, her sharp, clear voice, the indignant fires in her eye, breathing equal scorn and nobleness, were a study for the dramatic painter. She was Boadicea at the head of her Britons. She was Zenobia at the moment of her greatest confidence, when she de-

fied all the strength of Rome. M'Kewn was awed. He stammered some inconsequential apologies, which only caused her lip to curl with increasing scorn.

"Go, sir," she said, "no more!—and yet, one word, sir. There was a person, one Bostwick, a squatter for many years on my lands, whom I had the fortune to encounter at Colonel Moncrieff's when you and he were in conference together. Do you know, sir, what has become of that man Bostwick?"

It was a mere instinct—a somewhat savage one—that prompted the widow to send that shaft at random, seeking the proper victim. It struck him. M'Kewn, awed before, was now shocked, almost paralyzed. His face grew pale as death; his lips parted but not for speech. He stood for a moment vacantly gazing upon the inquirer, as still erect, with finger pointing directly to him, she seemed to await his answer. With a prodigious effort he at length gave it—only a single sentence, uttered with a gasp.

"I know nothing of the man."

"Ah!—well!—enough!"

She said no more, and, with a faint "good morning, madam," he hurried from the apartment.

CHAPTER LIII.

LANCE FRAMPTON GOES OFF SUDDENLY.

M'Kewn rode home with scarcely a consciousness of his progress. It was some time before he recovered from the Parthian shaft of the widow. He saw at a glance whither her suspicions tended, and it was only after a long interval, that he reflected that hers were suspicions only; and so long as the missing papers were not forthcoming, no matter what suspicions were entertained, they could in no respect avail against him. But were the papers missing? Had not Bostwick deceived him? Was there not some reason for supposing, from the course taken by the widow, that she was still in possession of her proofs? But a little calm reflection satisfied him to the contrary.

"If she had them, she never, with such a feeling toward me, and with such a passionate nature, could have kept quiet so long. It is her passion that speaks now. Had I not provoked her, she never would have let out so much. I'm glad that I stung her into the showing of her secret. It is now clear to me that Bostwick got the papers; and he—I trust that he is in the sea, or in ——, it matters not where, so he keeps away from this! Yet, she saw the rascal in that one glimpse at Moncrieff's? She has the eye of a hawk! She would fight, too! Sword or pistols, five paces even, and never wink an eye! She should have been a man! She would have been a famous one! As a woman she would never suit *me*. She might undertake to horsewhip me in my own household. Will she marry this mammoth Porgy? No, indeed! She has been too long free to seek or suffer another master, now! D—n him, unless she marries, she shall not save him! I will strip and beggar him, if there be law or lawyer in the land."

Leaving him in this amiable determination, which underwent no modification with the progress of time, it is proper that we should glance at the affairs of other and subordinate parties in our true life-history. The appointed period had arrived when Lance Frampton should be united to Ellen Griffin. The wedding was to take place the very night of the day when Captain Porgy made his last visit, as briefly described, to Mrs. Eveleigh. When he returned home, not having remained to dine as usual with the widow, he found the lieutenant already making his preparations. His wedding-clothes were spread out; Pomp was brushing his boots; one of the negro-girls was mending his suspenders; and the youth himself, busy about a dozen different things, was in such a state of nervous excitement that he really knew not what he was doing. Somewhat forgetting his own affairs, the captain jested with him merrily, after his style of humor, upon the event which was approaching. Porgy, of course, had been invited to attend; so has Millhouse; Tom, the cook, without being asked, notified the young man that he would be present.

"You's one ob de family, Mass Lance, an' I muss' see how you guine through de enaction [transaction]. It's wuss to some people, dis getting married, dan guine into de fight. Dey finds all ober wid a sawt ob cold sweat; and dey trimbles just as of

dey was a-feelin' de push of the inimy's bagnets. Now, Mass Lance, le' me tell you wha' for do. Jes' before you hab for 'tan up before de passon, tek' a stiff pull at de Jamaica. He will help mek' you 'trong.—Ef you skear, nebber le' Miss Ellen see you skear; for womans always will tak' de vantage of man wha' dey see is skear. You mus' 'tan up 'traight, hole up your head, and jes' you keep t'inking all de time, ef you no kill de inimy, he guine to kill you.—Da's it! and when you t'ink dat, you will shet your teet' close, an' fling out wid all you 'stren'th as ef you yer de cry all 'bout you, 'Ta'ken Qua'ters!' Ef you no feel 'trong dat time, when you t'ink you y'er dat cry, you loss de battle, and de woman will be you massa for ebber arter, for free t'ousan' yers [years], an' all de season's guine to be winter! Terry wha' I say, and feel youself strong, 'fore de time for de fight come on."

The sergeant contented himself with saying that, "Marriage is good for some people. 'Twould do for the cappin, ef so be he got hold of the right pusson; but what sich a fellow as you, should git a wife for, thar's no seeing. You've got nothing, and she's got nothing, and two nothings put together, make a house-full of expenses, and not a shilling of profit. 'Twouldn't ha' done you eeny harm, Lance, ef you'd waited tell you was forty-five, like the cappin, and then died a bachelor, onless you could git the right sort of pusson,—one that had something to put to your nothing, my lad. But that's not saying that Ellen ain't a mighty nice gal, Lance; she is, and a purty, and I reckon it's that mostly what has taken you. But to be purty ain't enough, and when you marries so soon, you don't give yourself hafe a cheince."

But these cold-water speeches did not discourage our lieutenant. They only served to increase his anxiety to have the affair over. An hour before sunset found the whole cavalcade ready for departure and in the saddle, Porgy taking the lead, Lance and Millhouse riding together, just behind him, and Tom and Pomp bringing up the rear. Pomp had his violin slung about his neck. In his blue jacket, with red facings, his glazed cap, and white homespun breeches, Pomp felt that he had made a large stride in dignity since the period of his rescue from the British ladies. We owe it to the captain not to omit stating that

he had sent off a cart a couple of hours before, with a demijohn of Jamaica, a gallon of wine, and some other small creature comforts, designed to help out the merry-making. He had also some presents for the bride in the shape of dresses and ornament, and a box and barrel, also conveyed by the cart, contained a pretty little contribution to the future housekeeping of the young couple. Millhouse saw these things put up to be sent, with no cordial feelings, though the subject was one upon which he dared not openly say a single word. But, in secret soliloquy, he deplored the captain's prodigacy.

"They doesn't stand in need of all them things, and it's jest nothing better than waste. Waste breeds want; and the Lord knows how soon he'll be a-wanting everything himself. Then what's the look out? It runs from him, when he's got it, jest like water from the mill, when the dam's broke down in a fresh. Lord! how he does want a strick master over him!"

It was sunset when the party reached Mrs. Griffin's, and the company was already beginning to assemble. There were several young people of both sexes whom the captain did not know, and one of the girls, all of whom had walked, had got a tub of water in front of the house and was coolly washing her feet. Fordham, the overseer, was already present, and it struck Porgy that he seemed very much at home. He was assisting Mrs. Griffin in spreading and arranging tables. The captain thought he appeared officious rather than polite, particularly as he saw him disposing the tippet upon the widow's shoulders, which had been disordered by her exertions. There was much good-humored talk, and some mirth, in under tones between them, which put the overseer in a more obtrusive and less agreeable point of view than he had hitherto shown himself to Porgy's eyes. But the affair was one of a sort to render all parties free and easy, and our captain was persuaded that the customs of the country, and the class, with which he did not claim to be very familiar, might possibly justify all these freedoms. He was the more readily disposed to think thus when the widow Griffin, approaching him with the profoundest deference, and full of smiles, entreated him to come and take a seat which she had placed and prepared entirely for him, where he could be at ease, in one of the best positions for witnessing the ceremony, and on a capacious cushion

which she herself had made especially for his use, and of which she entreated his acceptance. The captain was easily persuaded. The seat was a good one.—The cushion gave him the notion of a new luxury. He forgot very soon all his misgivings, while she sat beside him, listening with the most deferential manner to all he had to say, and Fordham civilly contented himself with making merry with the young people in the porch.

Candles and torches were lighted. The parson had arrived; the guests crowded into the hall, and pretty soon filled it. A decent interval, and the parson asked after the young lady. And soon she appeared attended by one bridesmaid. Ellen Griffin certainly looked very pretty in her simple white muslin frock, with one bright flower stuck in her silken ringlets, contrasting not more with them than with the delicate paleness of her cheeks. At her approach, Millhouse clapped Frampton on his shoulder, and murmured pretty loudly in his ears—

"Now, don't be skeer'd. As Tom says, jest you think you're a-charging the inimy, and stand up stout for the crossing of bag'nets. Don't you forgit the cappin is a-looking on you."

And the youth stood up, and his fingers met and twined in with those of the damsel, and the parson confronted them, and the ceremony was begun. Millhouse stood up in the rear of the lieutenant. But the occasional push in the ribs, and whispers which he gave him, did not seem to inspirit the youth, whose head continued to hang down bashfully, until, in the midst of the ceremony, the voice of the sergeant became audible—"Heads up, and the Lord be with you!"—to the consternation of the parson and half of the assembly. The youth was more prompt and decided in his demonstrations when he was instructed to salute the bride, which he did with a resounding smack that gave satisfactory testimony to the ears of the sergeant, who exclaimed—

"Well, that's doing it something like. Nobody kin say now it isn't done!"

The parson followed the example of the bridegroom, and Capt. Porgy followed him. The captain did not rest content until he bestowed a similar compliment, very suddenly, upon the widow Griffin herself, who stood provokingly nigh to Ellen; but he was confounded, a moment after, to find the overseer, Fordham, taking a similarly extempore liberty

"He's surely been tasting the Jamaica!" muttered Porgy *sotto voce*; but Millhouse, who overheard the speech, promptly rejoined—

"He's after the sperrit and the flesh, both! Lord! I swow! but I should like to eat a leetle off the same plate! The widow looks like a mighty nice eatable!"

Porgy turned away from the speaker as in some displeasure, and resumed his seat upon the cushioned chair. The ceremony was fairly over; it had not been a long one; and merry was the uproar that followed. The company adjourned to the piazza, to dance, leaving the hall mostly vacant, and to the free use of those who were to arrange the supper. Porgy had his chair wheeled out to the porch. In those days, the parson, like any person of flesh and blood, waited for the frolic and the feast; and he and Porgy, while the fiddle of Pomp began to speak up, engaged in a warm controversy as to the merits of matrimony; both being upon the same side throughout, but differing in the philosophies by which the subject was approached. The fiddle of Pomp called up many guests who had not been invited. The negroes of a dozen plantations filled the yard in front, already practising in "Juba" and "double shuffle." Suddenly, Millhouse discovered that the whole regiment of Glen-Eberley was among the crowd. Here was a palpable infraction of the laws. Here was treachery and insubordination. The sergeant was in great commotion.

"I won't stand it, cappin, I'll be into 'em like a troop of dragoons. They must pack, every rascal among 'em, man and woman, or hickories don't grow in this country."

"Psho!" growled Tom, the cook, "wha' for you make so much bodderation, Mass Millhouse, when dey's no use? De nigger done he wuk [work], he mus' hab he play! Enty you see dis dah wedding time, when ebb'ryhody, wha' aint git marry hese'f, kin hab he fun?"

"Tom's right," quoth Porgy, "let the negroes stay, Millhouse, and enjoy themselves."

"They won't be worth a copper for work to-morrow, cappin."

"Then we must give them holyday. But that's all a mistake. They will work better for a little play to-night."

"Das a trute, massa," said Tom. "De sergeant is too foolish preticklar. I don't t'ink he want nigger for sleep as much. Sleeping and dance is de t'ing for mek' nigger wuk like a gempleman, and keep him from tief. When he dance, he sweat out all he badness. Den he good, lub he massa, an' 'tan' up to he wuk, like a sodger 'g'in de inimy. I wonder, Mass Millhouse, of you nebber 'lows youse'f any pleasure?"

"Do you ever see me at it, Tom? Do you ever see me dancing?"

"Da's kaise you kain't. You got only one arm for swing, when you shakes you leg, an' you goes over the wrong side. But nigger wha' got he two arm, and he two leg, him kin dance an' feel he sperrit joyful! Look a' dem two boy, yonder, wha' dance Juba! Enty he do 'em great. Dem fellows is de most righteous young fellows, in Juba, I bin see, for t'ousand ye'rs! See how de leetle one shuffle he right leg, while t'udder one dey sleep. See how he's a-slapping he t'igha [thighs] wid bot' he hand, jes' in time wid de fiddle, le' de fiddle jump about in wha' tune he please. And de fellow look, all de time, as of he bin sleep; he eyes shut, and he face wid no more 'spression in 'em, dan a greasy punkin. And de udder fellow, wha' keep he eye so open bright, and look so keen 'pon de leetle fellow, see how he manage 'em! How he mek' um do jest de berry t'ing he want. Now he go quick, now he go slow, now he go quick and slow togedder, till de berry bones seem a-guine to fall out ob de breeches. Ha! de t'ing is a most extoniahing, won'ersome t'ing, Mass Millh'us. Dem two boys is mak' for not'ng in dis worl' but to dance Juba."

"Ef they were mine, Tom, I'd find out, at the end of a hickory, of they wasn't good for something besides Juba. I'd tickle 'em to another sort of music in the cornfield, I tell you."

"Psho!" muttered Tom, turning away, and giving the benefit of his response to his master. "De sergeant is too cussed foolish! He don't comprehend nigger nater 't all! He's always a-talking 'bout wuk, as of der's no play in de worl'; and always a-talking 'bout hick'ries, as of de airth was nebber mak' to raise any better t'ings! Da's always de way wid dem pore buckrah, wha's got no nigger ob he own. He's always a-wanting to wuk de niggers ob udder gempleman's till he bones come out ob he skin. Heh! he hab leetle lumps on he own shoulder-

ebbry morning, from hard mauasa, jes' for tek de stiffness out ob um, he hab better comperhension ob nigger nater."

This taste may suffice; white and black danced till midnight. The former in the piazza and hall, the latter in the open grounds beneath the trees. Solid was the supper that followed, and strong the drink; and wild enough the scampering, great the shouting, hard the riding, when each party took its way homeward, somewhere about the dawn. Lance Frampton's wedding was an event which is still remembered upon the Ashepoo!

CHAPTER LIV.

SUMMARY OF THE EVENTS OF THE SUMMER.

The summer was passing rapidly. Captain Porgy lived pretty much after the old fashion. He spent a day, occasionally, at Mrs. Eveleigh's; sometimes took his dinner at the widow Griffin's, where Lance Frampton had taken up his abode with his young wife. The time passed without much excitement, and with no absolute embarrassments. It was in the future that the clouds lowered threateningly, and the philosophy of Porgy was not to look in their direction. Whenever the subject of M'Kewn and his claims was forced upon him by the pertinacious Millhouse, he thundered and lightened for awhile, and finally thought upon the widow Eveleigh. She was his one particular bright star of hope, and one whom the policy of the sergeant for ever sought to place before his sight, as far as he dared do so after the stern warnings which he had received. The captain's own musings brought up her image with sufficient frequency to his eyes. He found himself perpetually arguing her virtues, her excellences, her charms, all of which he acknowledged freely to himself. But a sigh would usually close these meditations. There was still a something wanting to her perfections—he could not say what—or a something in excess, which left him always unwilling to pursue the subject to any definite result. It was through the medium of his own infirmity that he saw this deficiency, or ex-s, in the widow Eveleigh; and it was because he looked

through this medium only, that he failed to determine in what it consisted. We are better prepared to see, and to resolve it, than himself. His infirmity was self-esteem; and the veneration of the widow had been qualified and moderated by a long intercourse with those higher walks of society in which faith is not apt to flourish. Convention is very much the foe to hero-worship.

When dissatisfied with his meditations in respect to the widow Eveleigh, Porgy found, invariably, that his thoughts turned for relief in the direction of the simpler widow, Griffin. There was something so meek, and artless about this lady—something so little imposing and yet so grateful—that his mood became soothed while he contemplated her. She rose before his mind's eye in an always gracious attitude, and with a most gracious aspect. He remembered her slight form with pleasure, and contrasted it with that of the widow Eveleigh. The latter, in all such comparisons, appeared to him to be quite too masculine. The former seemed the very embodiment of feminine perfection. His ideas of woman were those of a period when the sex had not yet determined to set up for itself; though wielding a most potent sway in society, and even in politics, particularly in Carolina. His models, accordingly, required absolute dependence in the woman, though without meaning to abridge any of her claims as a woman, or to subjugate, unjustly, her individuality. He never dreamed of denying her any of her rights, when he required that she should recognise the lordship in the hands of the man. There was something assured in the position and the endowments of Mrs. Eveleigh, that startled his sense of authority. Her very virtues had a manly air which girded his pride; her very wealth, and its importance to his own case, seemed to humble him in his relations with her; and, when he admitted to himself, as he was forced to do, that this wealth was really a consideration in the case, the effect was to lessen the attractions of the lady, which were yet intrinsically very great in his eyes. Had she been poor, and were there no Mrs. Griffin in the field, we venture the opinion that Porgy would never have fancied any other woman. As the case stood, there were times when he decidedly gave her the preference, and fancied that his heart was absorbed wholly with her attractions;—when he believed that

his affections demanded her sympathies, and would be satisfied with nothing less; and, so feeling and thinking, he would resolve to ride over, after an early breakfast, or *to* an early breakfast, the next morning, and bring his cogitations to the final issue, and his doubts along with them. But a sound night's rest, with probably, some faint, shadowy vision of the widow Griffin in his dreams, seemed to act as a sudden sedative to his passion for the wealthier widow, and the purpose would dissipate into thin air, while his meditations would become more dubious, yet more intense than ever.

His admiration of, or attachment to, Mrs. Griffin, was not without its qualifications also. He could not fail to be disquieted as he reviewed her intellectual inferiority. In this respect, she was the weakest vessel in the world. She had no intelligent conversation; no education; no experience; no natural endowment; no mother wit; and, though her sweet temper, gentle bearing, and implicit deference, were all agreeable to his self-esteem, he could not but ask himself whether something more was not requisite to the one whom he should choose as a companion in life. While the war lasted, and when the life of the camp rendered most of the desires sensual, he would not have vexed himself with any such inquiry. He then thought only of the excellent management of the housekeeper; her skill in soups and stews; the culinary art which would convert a vegetable into a meat, a wing of chicken into a fish; and at such like magical and charming transmutation, viewed through this medium only, Mrs. Griffin was incomparable.

To a certain extent, Porgy still examined his object through these endowments. But his media of study had become multiplied. Released from the camp, and its necessities, old tastes had been resumed; ancient refinements were recalled; long banished, or subdued tastes, had been once more lifting their heads; and his sensual nature had been gradually taking some golden and amber hues and tints from the recovering vigor of his mind and fancy. Griffin, was, in certain respects, therefore, as difficult a case as Eveleigh; and the captain of partisans, sitting, pipe in mouth, at Glen-Eberley, and looking alternately to the fair widows on either hand, might be likened to that sagacious animal (whose length of ears has been unkindly made his

reproachful who sees, on each side of him, a goodly bundle of sweet fresh hay which, drawing both ways with equal strength, will suffer him honestly to approach neither. The struggle, occasioned by this embarrassment of taste and need, was such as sometimes to affect the appetite of the captain. He evidently grew thinner as the summer and his meditations grew together. There was no such amplitude of waist to be girded in, as formerly, when he toiled, and travelled, and fought, daily and nightly in the army. He now took in several more inches in his belt, and, not unfrequently, the sergeant drew his attention, with great concern, to his diminishing dimensions.

"It's the heat of this infernal summer," said Porgy.

"It's the want of a fondelsome wife, cappin, as I've been a-telling you all along—a woman of substance, that'll help you drive off that d——d sheriff, and put the idee that troubles you out of your head."

"How the devil should I get the sheriff out of my head when you are constantly thrusting the monster in at my ears!"

This outbreak usually terminated such a discussion. Meanwhile, M'Kewn, like some great political spider, sat in the centre of his web of meshes, and waited for the moment when, in the exhausted state of the victim, he should fall an easy prey. He was not altogether quiet, though seemingly so. The lawyers were at work in the city. Documents, with great seals, were in preparation. Vile inventions, vulgarly denominated writs and declarations, were getting in readiness. Malice was keen in its work, and law, with solemn brow and sable gown, was pliant—ready to give the demon all necessary help. Stately and serious letters had been brought to Porgy, from dignitaries yclept attorneys-at-law. He, too, had written solemn, serious, stately letters, to the same class of persons. These parties had benevolently arrayed themselves on both sides of the question, in order, perhaps, that justice, like any other fat body trying two stools, should fall equally between; and Porgy, on the one hand, and M'Kewn on the other, were looking to what was termed, "The Fall Term," for results more serious than any fall of the leaves known to either. M'Kewn confidently calculated on having his claims, in cash and character, equally satisfied; but he had moments of misgiving and apprehension, which

were usually betrayed by brief and expressive oaths, and adjurations, at the expense of persons of both the sexes.

"That d——d prying widow! If I only knew! That rascally ruffian, Bostwick—were I sure that he is feeding the sharks at the bottom of the sea!"

Unfortunately, the sea refused thus far to give up its secrets, and the prying widow was quite as close as she was curious. She seemed quite able to keep hers! The Scotchman got nothing by his curses. Whether, like chickens, they were destined to return home for roosting, is yet to be seen.

In certain respects, the summer was auspicious to all the parties. M'Kewn's overseer made him a good crop; Fordham did the same thing for the widow Eveleigh; while Millhouse, as if fate had studied to justify all his boasts, succeeded in beating both of them, in proportion to the force he managed. Never had such a crop been seen at Glen-Eberley. The season had been a very favorable one, and Millhouse had shown indefatigable industry, and a very correct judgment; but he probably owed a good deal to the fact that the lands of Glen-Eberley had been so long rested. Harvest-time came on under good auspices, and the sheaves were heavy with the golden grain. Great was the *swaggering* of Sergeant Millhouse, as, with his brother overseers, he reviewed the result. He had engaged in a friendly contest with Fordham and Blythewood (the overseer of M'Kewn), and they yielded the palm of victory to the sergeant, with good humor, and literally "acknowledged the corn." Porgy was pleased, of course; and Millhouse required him to acknowledge his satisfaction, and do justice to his particular genius, almost nightly. But, even the sergeant's pride and pleasure bore no sort of proportion to the same feelings in the bosoms of his negroes. They showed their triumph in greater degree than any other parties. It was their labor that had brought out the genius of Millhouse—it was their crop that had put to shame the negroes of the rival plantations. Porgy gave them a great pork supper after the harvesting, while the bets of the sergeant, with his opponents, resulted in his obtaining one also, at their expense, in which Jamaica occupied a place as distinguished as pork, and which kept busy the party of a dozen—the number present—through the hours of a goodly Saturday night; the dawn of

Sunday looking in upon them at their feast, before they were quite satisfied to think it finished.

The profits of Captain Porgy afforded no satisfaction to M'Kown, except so far as they promised better spoils when they should fall into his clutches. If he rejoiced in the result, it was with no benevolent feeling; but rather with the vindictive thought of the deeper disappointment and mortification of his victim, whom he should thus topple and overthrow from a greater height and hope, which this good fortune should encourage. He felt secure of his prey, unless in one event, and this he labored in a secret way to defeat. This subject of his apprehension was the marriage of Porgy with the widow Eveleigh. He was quite aware of the frequent visits of the captain to the widow, and he conjectured the object of these visits with much more certainty than Porgy could determine it. He, himself, would have had no objection to taking the widow to wife; but he had common sense enough to see that, with her present prejudices against him, the thing was impossible. But he was a hopeful person, and did not despair, if time were allowed him, of removing these prejudices. At all events, it was his policy to prevent the success of the captain. To this he addressed himself in sundry ways, one of which, and the most likely to be successful, was through her son, Arthur.

We have seen that his first approaches to the young man had been unsuccessful. For a time they continued so; but perseverance will remove mountains quite as certainly as faith; youth is flexible, indulgent, and easily persuaded, where much solicitude is shown to gain it; and gradually M'Kown found his way to the ears of Arthur. He contrived, without seeming effort, to meet the lad frequently, when he rode out or rambled in the woods. He was always particularly defevential to him, and thus adroitly appealed to the vanities of youth. Gradually, the slight barriers which the mother's prejudices had raised up in his mind, against his neighbor, were broken down. Finally, M'Kown persuaded him to accept a beautiful English pointer. The widow was greatly chagrined that he did so, and Arthur himself was disposed to regret it, when he found his mother so much fretted; but the thing was done; and the result was, that the son, after a while, began to combat the prejudices of his mother against the

Scotchman, and to declare that he always found him a marvellous proper man. The widow became a little angry, and the young man a little insubordinate. Unfortunately, she could not venture to convey all her suspicions to him, of M'Kewn's agency with the outlaws, and with the robbery of her negroes, so that all she could exhibit was her naked and, seemingly, unreasoning hostility, which Arthur was old enough to see lacked obvious justification. It was additionally unlucky that, recently, the cares and anxieties of Porgy had rendered him a somewhat cloudy companion for the young man, while the marriage and withdrawal of Lance Frampton, had taken from him one of the chief inducements for his visits to Glen Eberley.

Under these circumstances, M'Kewn enjoyed favorable opportunities which he never allowed to escape him. Gradually, and when in some measure he had won the ears of the youth, he suffered himself to speak of the affairs of Porgy—of his recklessness of character, and his associates; his debts; and went so far as to indulge in some sneers at his mammoth dimensions, his amplitude of abdomen, and the enormous appetite in which he was supposed to indulge. When he found, after a while, that these jests and sneers, provoked the young man's smiles, he felt encouraged. His next labor—a more delicate one, but which he pursued with as much art as diligence—was to convey to the youth a notion of what he supposed to be the object of Porgy in his visits to his mother. He insinuated the idea, so formidable to a young man of self-esteem, of a despotic father-in-law; then hinted at the waste of property to supply the appetite, or repair the ruined fortunes of a profligate; and then, in immediate sequence, he would turn to Porgy, and make a ludicrous portrait of his unwieldy figure.

The youth was slow to receive the revelation so gradually made; but, at length, it unfolded itself fully before the eyes of his mind, and, then, a great many things, hitherto strange in his past experience, became clear to his understanding. He could now comprehend the impudent language and manner of Millhouse, when the party dined with his mother, already described and which then provoked his wonder. As a matter of course his indignation was aroused, and the chief force of it fell upon the captain. But the suggestions of M'Kewn, as they were de-

signed, led him further led him to think somewhat harshly of his mother, and suspiciously of her motives in aiding the captain. That she should sympathize with Porgy, encourage his visits, aid him with loans of money, receive him with so much welcome, show herself so solicitous of his comforts, were all ascribed to her own secret attachment to the man, and argued the probability that she would finally lift him into the lordship of the household; an idea which Arthur Eveleigh found quite insupportable. The moment that this apprehension was forced upon him, he hurried home full of aroused feelings which he neither could, nor desired to, suppress. This happened at a moment of some importance. He found Captain Porgy closeted with his mother, evidently discussing some matter, which seemed of mutual interest. Perhaps it may be well to account for the present interview.

As we have shewn, the time was ripening fast for the consummation of M'Kewn's legal projects for the ruin of his debtor. The summer had past: the fatal "Fall Term" had come; the courts were in session; and at length there were decrees, and judgments. Porgy was advised by his lawyers that danger was at hand; and that he might upon reasonably look to see hawks abroad. He had been warned also that his case could not be helped, that judgment could not long be averted. He, accordingly, prepared himself, as well as he could, to fold his robes about him and die with decency. There were some preliminary performances which he felt to be absolutely necessary to his peace of mind. In order to attend to one of these, he summoned Tom to his presence.

"Tom," said he, "put on your best clothes. I want you to ride over with me to Mrs. Eveleigh."

Tom was soon becomingly equipped. The master and man were soon mounted; and, on the way, the captain opened the business upon which he was bent, to his favorite minister.

"Tom."

"Sah!"

"You are still a tolerably young fellow."

"Ha! massa, only I bin know dat."

"You have no wife, but you will be thinking of one some of these days."

"Lawd ha' mussy; we dees we bes', but who kin tell wha' guine happ'n to um next day and to-morrow?"

"True, Tom, who knows! You will get a wife, you will probably have a family, and you might be happy for a great many years, if your life were spared so long."

"Da's true, maussa."

"I don't wish to shorten your life, Tom—"

"Wha' maussa!"

"I wish to see you live as long as God will let you—"

"To be sure; t'ank you, maussa!"

"But, Tom, if I am to see you live as the slave of that scoundrel, M'Kewn, I should rather you were dead. Now, Tom, I must either sell you to Mrs. Eveleigh, or shoot you."

"Shoot me Tom! Oh! git out, maussa, da's all only you' ole foolish talk. Tom aint for shoot."

"Then I must sell you, Tom, or M'Kewn will have you."

"Ha! I tek' de swamp fuss! I nebber guine lib wid dat crook-eye Scotchman."

"Better live with Mrs. Eveleigh."

"I no so much lub for lib wid woman, nodder, maussa. Woman, maussa, is a'most too hard 'pon nigger. Wha' for I must be sell?"

"I owe M'Kewn money—the sheriff will seize you if you belong to me. I wish Mrs. Eveleigh to buy you, to keep you out of his clutches; and if I am ever able to buy you back from her, I will do so. Meanwhile, I will hire you from Mrs. Eveleigh."

Such was Peggy's scheme, by which to save his favorite Tom, for a long time, failed to see the merits of it; but, silenced at length, if not satisfied, he followed his master, with a very gloomy aspect, to the residence and the presence of the widow There, our captain of partisans made a frank showing of his fears, his wishes—Tom being in the presence all the while.

"Pinckney writes that nothing can be done to avert this judgment—that it must take effect—that the lien upon the lands is perfect—that judgment upon the unliquidated accounts, once entered, will bind all the slave property and moveables subject only to your mortgage, and that that mortgage will not prevent the sale. Tom, Mrs. Eveleigh, is the only one of my negroes not covered by your mortgage. I hesitated to force

my entire control over his destinies, as it was my purpose always that Tom should never be the slave of any man but myself. I should free him this hour, if this were possible; but Pinckney writes that such grant of freedom would not avail against existing debts and creditors. But I may make a *bona-fide* sale of him, Mrs. Eveleigh, and I propose to do so to you. You will give me a hundred guineas for him, with the understanding between us that I am to hire him from you at fair wages, and that you will sell him back to me, on the same terms, whenever I shall feel able to repurchase him. Should I never do this, my dear madam, I shall still feel some consolation that I have kept my vow—to sell him to no other man—and, in selling him to a woman, I sell him to one whom I esteem the very first among her sex.

Here Tom put in.

"Yer buy me, Miss Eb'leigh, I good sarbant to yer. You's a lady. Yer wha' mausa say. He's berry much trouble dese times, and don't know wha' for do! You kin help 'em. Help 'em, an' I berry much 'blige to you, ma'am. Ef you buy me, I promise you I guine tek' care ob you, same as I tek' care ob mausa.—When Tom say he guine be good sarbent, you kin do no better dan buy 'um."

"I believe you, Tom," said the lady, kindly, "and I think I may safely promise you to be an indulgent mistress. You may go home now, Tom, and consider yourself as belonging to me I shall arrange all with your master."

"T'ank you, missis, and de Lawd pour down he blessing 'pon you 'tell you beg him for stop, you own se'f. God bress you, missis, an' a berry good mornin' to you."

"Thank you, Tom. Good-by to ye."

And with a grasp of the hand of his late master, and a bow to his new mistress, Tom disappeared, and proceeded to canter back to Glen-Eberley.

Porgy had prepared and brought with him the necessary bill of sale. He had signed it in the presence of Lance Frampton, the night before. The widow asked if he did not desire any written engagement, from her, to resell the negro to him, according to their private understanding; but, with his usual indifference to his own securities, the captain declined it. The lady

gave him an order upon the city for a hundred guineas, and received, and put away, the bill of sale. The wages of Tom, while he remained in the service of his former owner were then easily adjusted; and the parties were still engaged in conversation, the captain very low in spirits, and the lady, with a judicious delicacy, striving to soothe and conciliate him, when Arthur Eveleigh bounced into the room

CHAPTER LV.

THE WIDOW AND HER SON.

A SINGLE glance at the young man sufficed to show that he was greatly out of humor. He spoke with bare civility, and no cordiality, to his ancient friend, the captain. The widow regarded her son with anxious and reproachful eyes, which he retorted with such looks of evident suspicion and bad feeling as to confound and disquiet her. Porgy saw that something was wrong, but had no notion that he was a party to the provocation. He spoke to Arthur in the old language of familiarity and affection, but without perceiving any very grateful effect from it. The young man had come in with his fowling-piece and birding equipments, which suggested to Porgy the proper subject for talking with him.

"Why do you not look for your birds at Glen-Eberley, Arthur? It is a full month since you have paid me a visit. The partridges are in abundance. You can scarcely walk anywhere without flushing them."

"I need not go off the place here, sir, to seek for birds; when I do, I find them in as much abundance, at Mr. M'Kewn's, as I desire."

"M'Kewn!" said Porgy and was silent.

"I wish, my son," remarked the lady, "that you would seek your birds in any other quarter."

"And I don't see why, mother. Mr. M'Kewn is very civil to me."

"There are some civilities which I am half inclined to regard as injuries!" said the lady gravely; "but it should be enough for *you*, my son, that I have expressed my wishes. My objections to this man—"

"Unless there be *good* reasons for them, mother—"

"Of the goodness of my reasons, my son, you should allow me to be the judge, without requiring me to shew what they are. It ought to be sufficient for you that I have expressed my wishes—"

"Your wishes? Ah! but have you expressed them?" was the pert response, and something of a sneer upon his lips.

"I do not understand you, Arthur. You certainly have heard from me the repeated wish that you should have as little communion with this man, as was not absolutely unavoidable."

"And I don't see why, mother. Mr. M'Kewn seems quite as much of the gentleman as most men I've seen," replied the youth petulantly, and looking at Porgy.

"You have been unfortunate, my son; or, which is more likely, you are scarcely yet a sufficient judge of the subject, or a sufficient discriminator of persons."

"Perhaps not," said the fiery youth, his face reddening; "but mother—!"

Here he paused abruptly and with evident effort restrained himself. Porgy at this moment rose. His manner was mild, calm, and dignified; a little touched with sorrow. He felt that he was in at the beginning of something like a scene, and he had no taste for it, or curiosity to witness its close.

"Mrs. Eveleigh, suffer me once more to thank you for your kindness. I shall remember with gratitude what you have done for me. I will trespass no longer. Good-by, ma'am—good-by;" and he shook her hand warmly. "Arthur, I am half tempted to regret that you can find your birds at any other point than Glen-Eberley. We can afford you *friends* there as well as birds; and such friends as will never desert you when the battle's coming on."

To this the youth had no answer. He gave his hand sullenly to the captain, who looked at him kindly and curiously, but with a smile that seemed to say, "I understand all your difficulty, my boy," but, beyond his farewell, he had no more words to say. The

widow would have persuaded him to stay to dinner, but, glancing significantly from her to her son, he declined the invitation. He did instinctively understand the case of Arthur Eveleigh. Riding out of the avenue, he muttered to himself—"The foolish boy; that scoundrel, M'Kewn, has been poisoning his ears. I should not be surprised if the rascal had been telling him that I was courting his mother."

He meditated sadly as he rode. "What a pitfall, what a thing of snares, of serpents, and sorrows, is this miserable life. How the devil hangs upon the footsteps of innocence, turn whither it will, ready to delude, to defraud, to degrade, to destroy. Here is this youth, just as he begins to drink of the better and purer sweets of life, the fiend drops his malignant poison into the bowl; embittering the taste as well as the draught—and shaping the whole future career for sin and sorrow. I had taken a great liking to that boy. He could have made a noble fellow. But, he looks upon me as an enemy. He looks upon his own mother with suspicion. It has needed but a mean cunning on the part of this miserable wretch, M'Kewn, to make him turn upon his natural and best allies. Heaven help us, for with the devil at our elbow, with foes among those who surround us, and the vices and vanities at our own hearts to second their labors, unless Heaven help us in season, and with all its angels, hope and humanity stand but a poor chance for happiness."

The subject offered a fruitful matter for reflection after he got home, which a draught of Jamaica with the sergeant, and a long dissertation from that person, *de omnibus rebus*, &c., failed wholly to arrest or dissipate. We must leave him to its indulgence while we return to the widow's, curious to see that issue between herself and son, which Porgy preferred to escape. She was not slow to approach the subject.

"My son you have behaved very strangely, very coldly, almost rudely, to Captain Porgy. May I know what he has done to occasion this treatment?"

"I don't see that he deserves any other," was the dogged reply.

"Indeed, Arthur, this is a very singular change of feeling and opinion. A month or two ago, you were so perpetually over at Glen-Eberley, that I feared you might wear out the welcome you received; now—"

"I went then to hunt with Lieutenant Frampton."

"But you also hunted with the captain, and your report was always singularly favorable in respect to *him*. You have evidently nothing kind or cordial in your feelings toward him, now; and, as I trust you will never allow yourself to be guilty of any mean evasion of the truth, I hope that you will frankly inform me as to what has caused that change in your conduct, which is sufficiently apparent to him as well as to me."

"But I want to know, mother, why it is that you are so anxious that I should be on good terms with this Captain Porgy."

"I am anxious that you should be just and honorable, my son; not mean, or captious; not capricious and unprincipled."

"I don't see how I should be either, only because I do not like him."

"Unless you have a good reason to justify your dislike, you must be all of these, Arthur. We owe Captain Porgy a great and vital service—"

"We owe just as much to Lieutenant Frampton, and the one-fisted sergeant, mother."

"That may be, but that doesn't lessen our obligations to him."

"At least, *they* do not *presume* upon *their* services."

"I am yet to know that *he* does."

"What does he come here so frequently for, then?"

"I suppose he finds some pleasure in doing so."

"Ah! and you find pleasure in it, too, mother?"

There was an increasing color in the widow's cheeks, as she met the gaze and heard the significant inquiry of the forward boy, but she answered him very quietly—

"Certainly; I find Captain Porgy a very pleasant associate. I know few gentlemen whose conversation is so sensible and interesting."

"Gentleman! he looks very much like a gentleman with that great paunch of his, large as a rice-barrel."

"Stop, Arthur; I must not suffer this sort of language in my hearing. You forget yourself, my son; you forget what is due to me, and to this worthy, but unfortunate man. I shall say no more of what we owe him for saving your mother from indignity, and possibly from death, since you do not seem sufficiently to comprehend the extent or value of this service. It is enough

that I require you to forbear such rude language of one whom I am pleased to honor as my friend and neighbor."

"Is he going to be content, mother, with being friend and neighbor? Does he aim at nothing further? Is he not borrowing all your money to pay for his extravagances? Is he not—"

"Stop, once more, my son! Am I to understand, Arthur, that you suppose *yourself* likely to lose the money which I lend to Captain Porgy?"

"I don't see what else will follow, living as he does, and having to pay off his old debts."

"You have been listening to an enemy, Arthur. But let me disabuse you. It is not possible that you or I shall lose anything by the loans made to Captain Porgy. These are all sufficiently secured by mortgage; the papers drawn up by Colonel Pinckney, who assures me that the debt is perfectly secure. We get legal interest on the money, and, so far, Captain Porgy is, perhaps, less under obligations to me than I am to him. If your cause of disquiet contemplates nothing beyond this, you may reasonably dismiss it from your mind; but there is something further, Arthur. The evil spirit who has found his way to your ear, has never been content with so meagre a scheme of doing mischief. Let me hear all that disturbs you, my son; keep nothing back; I would rather you should pain me directly to the core, than leave me to apprehend that you entertain thoughts and feelings in secret, which you dare not unfold to your mother."

The youth seemed for a moment uneasy. He strode hurriedly off to a window, and seemed to look out. The widow calmly awaited him, without seeming to observe his motions. After a pause, he wheeled about suddenly, approached her, and, as if he had brought himself to the proper point of determination, he said:—

"I ask you, mother, if you think that Captain Porgy comes here only when he wants company or money? I want you to tell me if you think he has not some other purpose? Speak candidly, mother, as you ought to speak to me, and as I have a right to expect that you will speak."

The mother almost sternly surveyed the youth—then, with rigid lips, she answered—

"We may think differently, Arthur, about our mutual rights

I certainly ought not to be required to account for the secret motives of action of Capt. Porgy or of any other man. Your challenge of my candor, unless you have some imputation upon it, is only a gratuitous offence, my son. At your age and mine, there may be cases when it would not be proper to unfold to you all my thoughts or opinions. Where these contemplate the character or motives of other persons, I should be wrong in doing so. If you have any *particular* question to put to me, Arthur Eveleigh, which would seem to be the case from what you do say, let me hear it, and if it is proper for me to answer, and if my son has a right to make the question, let him be assured that I shall answer with the utmost readiness."

The youth hastily strode the chamber. He was evidently reluctant, half-ashamed, to betray the lurking suspicions in his mind. But, at length, as if vexed at his own weakness, he paused, stood erect, and pointing to a splendid, full length of Major Eveleigh, which hung against the wall—a noble figure, in the prime of manhood, and garbed in the rich military costume of Britain,—he cried out with a burst of passion—

"That is my father, mother, as he looked, as he lived. Can it be possible that you mean to fill his place with such a person as this Captain Porgy?"

And the boy looked noble, erect, manly, almost magnificent, like his father, as he uttered the passionate inquiry. Had there been sufficient cause for his question,—had the widow shown herself weak, frivolous, wanton, easily accessible, and inclining to fling herself away upon a worthless person—there would have been something very admirable in his bearing and position The mother looked at him a moment, her face pale with indignation, and the tears gushed, all at once, in a flood from her eyes Through them she spoke, with impetuous anger.

"Arthur Eveleigh, you have been listening to that devil of mischief, M'Kewn. You have suffered this vile Scotchman to fill your ears with venomous discourse. You have meanly permitted him to whisper to you a scandal of your own mother. You have basely suffered him to fill your heart with evil thoughts of one to whom your mother owes her life and honor. And you have suffered this willingly. You were warned against this evil-minded wretch. You were taught to regard him as an object of sus-

no longer any barrier between him and the sheriff. Col. Pinckney wrote him an affectionate letter, full of sympathy, but cutting him off from all farther hope of escape. Pinckney did not stop at this. He sought the sheriff, who was a well-known army man, of good nature, something of a humorist, indeed, and with quite a friendly regard for Porgy, whom he had met more than once during the war, and whom he very well knew. The object of Pinckney now was to persuade the sheriff to as much indulgence as possible. To "do his spiriting gently." To this the latter was naturally inclined. But, on the other hand, there was the impatient creditor, M'Kewn, urging the rapid execution of the proceedings. The law! The law! He claimed the benefit of the law in its utmost rigor, and waited, with intense appetite for the news of the execution of his processes, the sale of the lands of Porgy, and the seizure of the negroes. Pinckney wrote the captain all these particulars. He had tried the inflexible creditor in vain. He was resolved on his pound of flesh, and as much blood as he could draw along with it.

Porgy read the letter to Millhouse. The latter, by a private despatch, summoned Lance Frampton to the council. He came over to Glen-Eberley armed to the teeth, with rifle on his shoulder, sabre at his side, pistols in holster, just as he had gone through the wars. The requisitions of the sergeant had been to this effect. He had expressly enjoined the lieutenant to come in war-fashion. He met him at the entrance, armed in like manner though not on horseback; and with an ominous shaking of the head and the hand, in answer to Frampton's inquiries, he said—

"The inimy is in motion, lieutenant; we've got to stand an assault, maybe a siege, and I know'd you warn't aguine to stand by and see the cappin bombarded and invaded, without being ready to jine at the first sound of the trumpet. You'll see the cappin's mightily changed in the last week. He's more down in the mouth than I ever seed him. He kain't talk, and when a man kain't talk, that's been so used to it, it's about the worst sign in his sarcumstances. But, don't you say nothing of what you sees. Jest you listen to me, and when I pushes on one p'int, be ready to follow up the push. We must purtect the property from the inimy. Ef they gits the place, thar's not much use for

the niggers, and ef they gits the niggers, thar's not much use for the place. The two stands together pretty much like gun and gunpowder. What's the use of the gunpowder if thar's no gun, and what's the use of the gun if thar's no powder? You sees! Now, we must purtect the niggers and plantation against siege and storm. That's the first needcessity; the next is to open the cappin's eyes to the needcessity of marrying the widow. His sarcumstances ain't to be put off any longer. We must, both on us, argufy him into the sense of this needcessity."

Having, as he thought, sufficiently given the lieutenant his cue, the latter was allowed to enter the dwelling, and to see his old commander. He found Porgy sombre enough, but glad to see him. He put on a cheerful countenance when he beheld the youth, gave him his hand, and, for a little while, seemed to recover his spirits. But Frampton remarked that, though he entered the room, armed *cap-a-pie*, the captain never seemed to observe it; and that, even while he spoke to him of familiar things, and with a smile upon his face, his mind yet seemed to wander. After a while, he lapsed into moody silence, never once taking the pipe from his mouth in the course of half an hour, even though its fires had gone out. The lieutenant took his place in the household quietly, as if he had never left it. He had his bed there that night. After supper, Tom being warned to be in attendance as an auxiliary, the sergeant opened by degrees upon the subject of embarrassment before them.

"Ef you has no dejection, cappin, I wish you'd read to the lieutenant that 'ere letter of Col. Pinckney."

"Oh! to be sure. You've not heard, Lance, that the Philistines are about to descend upon us. Writs are out, and executions, levies, and arrests, Ca Sa's and Fi Fa's and I suppose *ne exeats*, and whatever other diabolical inventions of the law can be brought to bear upon a man whom the devil has determined to destroy. I told you of my fears before we got home. I was then better prepared for the disaster than I am now. The respite I have had, the restoration of my negroes, and the help in money afforded me by Mrs. Eveleigh, have helped to spoil me for vicissitudes; and, in getting a new taste of my old mode of life, I am much more reluctant than ever to give it up. But the thing seems inevitable now. This letter of Colonel Pinckney

which I will read to you, will show you how the land lies, and from what quarter, and in what force, the enemy will probably make his approaches."

And he read the letter.

"The case you see, is hopeless. The wolves will have their victim. Nothing can be done."

"Well, cappin, I doesn't edzactly see that. Here's Lance, and me both, and Tom, all ready to have a fight on it, and beat off the inimy, ef they don't come on us too many at once. We three, and you, cappin—"

"Pooh, pooh, sergeant! That's all nonsense. There's no fighting to be done in the matter, and no flying, that I can see. All that is left to me now, or is likely to be left to me, is my philosophy, and that of my little Frenchman. I am trying to school myself to the trial with the best grace in the world, though by the powers, if a good fight would help the matter, I'd be pretty quick to man the fortress; but that's out of the question. The notion of the sergeant is simply absurd. The case, look whichever way you please, is absolutely hopeless."

"You're clean wrong; jest bekaise you refuses to look the right way. Now, I've been seeing, a mighty long while past, that thar was a way of saving all, and blocking the game on the inimy, and that, you see, was jes' by coming down upon the widow Eb'leigh, and storming her premises. I show'd you, long ago, how a widow was a sort of post which had been afore taken by the inimy, and so was to be taken ag'in; and where the storming was conducted by a good off'cer, from the line of the army, that the thing must be done easily. This widow Eb'leigh, now—"

"Hush up, Millhouse. No more of that. It must not be thought of. How will it look for me—I who have been borrowing the widow's money—to propose to pay my debts to her, by making her my wife?"

"And the most excellentest way for settling a debt that ever was invented on this airth."

"Why, man, I've gone to her as a beggar. I owe her six hundred guineas. Shall I go to her and offer her payment in a bankrupt husband?"

"But ef she likes you, cappin, won't she jump at it?"

"Ah! but that is all very doubtful."

"A man what's doubtful, I may say, is a'most d——d a'ready. Ther must not be no doubt when you're a-guine to storm a fortress. Now, I see that this here widow is a'most ready to surrender at the first blow of the bugle. I know it, cappin; I sees it in everything she does for you, and in every look she gives you; and the best thing you kin do is jest to make a trial of the circumstances of the case."

Porgy shook his head.

"Now, don't you be a-shaking of your head as of that was nothing in it. But jest you hear what I'm guine to ax you.—S'pose, now, the thing is jest as I'm a-saying it. S'pose she's ready to give in the moment you are ready to make the attack? Won't you be a most bloody fool—pardon me, cappin; I doesn't mean to be onrespectful—but I ax, won't you be a bloody fool, not to give her a chaince to surrender handsome, and save her feelin's, and save this fine property, and save your niggers, only bekaise you are so mealy-mouthed. Won't you feel most mean and vicious, and onhappy, of so be you keeps hanging off, and she has to come and pop the question to you? I declar', cappin, it seems a most pitiful and cruel thing for you not to help her out a leetle, by jest axing her in time to save her feelin's."

"Ha! ha! ha! Delightful! 'Pon my soul, Millhouse, you put the case in quite a new and striking point of view. You think I should speak in time to prevent the widow from addressing me, and so spare her blushes."

"In course, I does! That's jest the thing—spar' her blushes!"

"But, suppose she were to propose to me, and I were to—refuse her?"

"Lord love you, cappin, and be merciful to your onderstanding; but you wouldn't be so onkind and outright redickilous, as to do that—and after all that's she's been a-doing for you."

"It would be rather hard-hearted, I confess."

"'Twould be most monstrous redickilous! But, cappin, you mus'n't wait for her to do the axing. It mout-be she'd come arter awhile, and when he couldn't stan' keepin' in her feelin's any longer; but then it' most be—it would be—too late, then to help your circumstances. Ef the property was to be sold by the sheriff, what would it bring, I want to know, now, when that's

so little money gains about. Not enough, by half, to pay this warmint, M'Kewa. But, ef 'twas only on account of the lady, it's your business to speak quick. The man has no right to keep the poor woman a-waiting on him. He has no right to keep a-thinking, with pipe in his mouth, while she's a weeping and pining away a-most to nothin'."

"But I don't see that Mrs. Eveleigh shows any such signs of suffering, Millhouse."

"It's all inward, cappin. She's got too proud a stomach, to show outside, in her flesh and spirits, how much she suffers inwardly. Many's the woman that's looked fat and hearty, while her heart's been a-breaking in her buzsum. I don't mean to say that the widow Eb'leigh is so far gone, cappin, 'kaise, you see, she's had ixper'ence in heart affairs, being a widow; but she's got her feelin's and sufferin's, cappin, in the heart, that keeps it sore and bleedin' all over, though it's too strong to break. She oughtn't to hev' any sufferin's and bleedin's at all, ef so be you kin help her; and I say, and I'm sure on it, that you *kin* help her, jes' by the same thing that helps you'self. I'll leave it to the lieutenant here, and to Tom, ef they don't 'gree with me, that the widow Eb'leigh has a nateral right to marry you, considerin' your sarcumstances."

Tom nodded his head affirmatively.

"You hab for marry 'em, maussa. He bin too much good to you, maussa. You can't 'scuse 'em—you can't 'fuse [refuse] 'em. You hab for do it, den we all t'ree b'long to one anudder, maussa."

Frampton was of opinion that the proceeding would certainly relieve the captain of all his present difficulties, and was for this reason quite advisable.

"That's it, cappin! considerin' the sarcumstances! It's the sarcumstances you've got to consider; and I say it again, considerin' them, and the sarcumstances of the widow, she's got a nateral right to marry you."

"But have I any natural right to marry her?"

"In course! Ef she's got a right to you, thar's no help for it, and you must jine your right to her'n. You've got no right to refuse to hev' *her*, seein' it's her needcessity to hev' *you*; and the true way for an honest man, and a gentleman, and a good

sodger, is to put it to her manful, at once, and not keep her a-waiting, and a longing and a sorrowin', till the poor woman gits sick from her needcessity."

"Really, Millhouse, you make a new case of it. You are making it clearly a duty and a charity that I should marry a lady of fortune, and so save myself from the sheriff."

"That's the how! That's the very thing."

"Now, Millhouse, if I could only be sure that the excellent lady whom you so freely discuss, labored under any such feelings as you describe—"

"Aix Lance—aix Tom!" responded the sergeant, appealing to each of them in turn.

Lance certainly had seen the very favorable glances, which the widow had cast upon the captain.

"Sheep's eyes, they calls 'em, cappin," quoth the sergeant.

Tom gave his opinion with solemnity and confidence.

"Miss Eb'leigh hab eyes, enty, for see, maussa? Well, who dat say maussa ain't man 'nough for please any woman? Da's it! I see 'em how he look at maussa. He fire up, he mouth 'tan' open and sweet, and when he talk to 'em, it's jest like any bud [bird] dah sing to 'nudder but, and axing 'em wha' for we kain't buil' nest togedder dis spring?"

"Well," said the more liberal sergeant, "'twould be all mighty great nonsense to talk of building nests in spring, when here we are jest on the edge, as I may say, of winter. But what Tom says would be quite right, ef he'd make the nest buildin' together about Christmas. I like a marriage, Christmas time, better than any other; and ef the cappin does the right thing, like a man, we'll have a raal blow-out this coming Christmas. You've hearn, cappin. Me, and the lieutenant, and Tom, all agrees that the widow looks on you with mighty sweet eyes; and I say she's got a nateral right to you, and you've got a nateral right to her; and you must jine your rights, and give us a blow-out this Christmas and ef the sheriff, or M'Kewn, or any other warmint, comes shark ing about these primises, I've got a nateral right to give him a h—ll of a licking, and I'll hev' my rights, by blazes, whenever I gits a chsince!"

We are not prepared to say that the captain was convinced by his argument, which was continued for sometime after this, and

wound up by a stoup of Jamaica, when the parties all retir-
the night. Millhouse congratulated himself and companions
a favorable impression had been made, but Frampton was
ful. His sympathies had taught him better how to see
he captain's heart, and to comprehend his mysteries. The
ant judged only of what *should* be the effect of arguments,
n eloquence, so potent as his own.

e next morning, at sunrise, found the two subordinates

Frampton and Millhouse went forth together in consulta-
the latter looking exceedingly ominous, like some great
log on duty, and having a keen scent in his nostrils of some
ler. At breakfast, the subject of the last night was resum-
r the sergeant, but the captain made no response. He ex-
ed no surprise to see Frampton linger away from his young

The lieutenant said nothing of the object of his visit, or
e summons which induced it, but quietly assumed the air
ttitude of one on duty. The good youth, accustomed to
ıry authority, and trained up in great measure by Porgy,
prepared to obey at every peril. Of law, he had only vague
ıs. So far as his experience went, civil authority had been
a name—a venerable thing, perhaps—but which men every
e plucked by the beard, without fear, and with impunity.
ıad yet to learn that it could prove more potent now than
g the seven years previous, when each man did the thing
was best in his own sight, and when there were no judges
e land, however numerous might be the executioners. He
ome to stand up beside, and for, his feudal lord—such was
r the sort of relation between the parties—and to break
for him, and peril life, against all comers. It is possible
Porgy understood the purport of his visit, but he forebore
mark upon it. The youth was simply welcomed, as of old;
as of old, he went at once on duty. The sergeant soon
ed him that the duty was to be a vigilant one, and was quite
sary. The two mounted guard alternately. Certain favor-
egroes were selected as scouts and videttes, who watched
e approaches to the plantation. One was chosen to ascend
gh the scuttle to the housetop, and keep his eyes at once
ery point of the compass. And thus matters stood, without

any event to excite alarm, until the third day after Frampton's arrival.

On this day, some little after noon, and just when Porgy was beginning to think of dinner, the scouts came in bringing intelligence of the approach, in the direction of Glen-Eberley, of a very stylish looking gentleman, in black habit, driving the vehicle, then in fashionable use for one or two persons, called the "chaise," a heavy lumbering sort of gig, with a capacious top to it. This *was* the sheriff, the well-known, amiable, graceful and accomplished Colonel ——, whose solicitude to do an unpleasant duty pleasantly, had prompted him to undertake a task which is now-a-days commonly confided to a deputy. At the gate of the avenue of Glen-Eberley, the sheriff found himself suddenly arrested by a person in military habit. Before he knew where he was, a huge horseman's pistol was clapped to his head, and he was required to give an account of himself. The sheriff was confounded.

"Why, young man," said he, "what does all this mean? Why are you armed to the teeth, and why am I arrested with violence on the peaceful highway? Who are you, and what do you take me for?"

"For a person that's after no good, stranger!" was the answer of Lance Frampton. "We hear that there's some enemies of Captain Porgy after him, who want to seize him and his negroes, and we are jest here to see that they do no such thing!"

"Why, who is there to take his property?"

"Who! I don't know; but they are enemies, and varmints, sheriffs, and sich like tory people!"

Frampton's modes of cataloguing, showed considerable inexperience, by which the sheriff was amused rather than annoyed.

"You do not mean to say, my friend, that you would resist a sheriff in the execution of his lawful duties?"

"Let him only try it here!" was the indignant answer.

"Well, my good friend, my business here is to see Captain Porgy."

"But you're not the sheriff?"

"Sheriff, indeed! I'm Col. ——, formerly of the army. I know Captain Porgy well. He'll be glad to see me, I've no doubt"

"And you're not one of the sheriff's fellows, then?" demanded Frampton, doubtfully.

"Do I look like any one's fellow?" asked the sheriff, laughing.

"I don't know! I'm on duty here to see that no sheriff, or any of his fellows, get into the place; and I'm bound to examine closely. But I'll take you in, where you can see another person that's on duty, and that knows better what's to be done than I do. Get out boy"—to the sheriff's driver—"get up behind."

In a moment, Frampton had changed places with the negro.—This done, he took the reins, saying as he drove—

"If you were to drive up this avenue, stranger, except under my charge, you'd be most like to have a bullet through your jacket."

"The devil! You have then converted Glen-Eberley into a fortified place?"

"Yes, indeed! And we can make a pretty stiff fight against a good troop of sheriffs."

"Humph! The captain's at home, I suppose?"

"Yes indeed! But it's a chance you won't get a sight of him. It all depends upon Sergeant Millhouse. He's the officer on duty. You must make it all clear to him, that you don't come for any evil, before he'll let you 'light."

"Indeed!" and, with his secret meditations, the sheriff smiled pleasantly enough; but his smiles were arrested as suddenly as he himself had been before, as, almost in the middle of the avenue, Frampton drew up the horses.

"Here's the sergeant!" said he.

The sheriff, at the same moment, saw approaching, from the head of the horses, a stalwart figure, with pistols in belt, and sabre waving in his left hand. A cap made of the skins of a pair of gray-squirrels, with the tails flapping on both sides, covered his head. His uniform was of strange military mixture, altogether indescribable, but propriety requires that we should describe it as a uniform. His eye was fiercely suspicious, and his mouth was compressed with most rigid determination.

"Who's he?" was the stern demand of the sergeant as the vehicle was stopped, and he presented himself, waving his sabre, in front of the visitor.

"He calls himself Col. ——, of the army; says he's not the sheriff, or any of his fellows, and wants to see the captain."

The sergeant glared at him with eyes of piercing inquiry; and, after a moment's pause, said—

"Take off your hat, stranger, that I may see what sort of a head you've got of your own!"

The sheriff, smilingly civil, complied with the requisition.

"He looks onharmful enough, Lance, but there's no knowing. I never haird of any Col. —— in the army; I've heard of a cappin with some sich name, but I never haird that he did anything much. He warn't no great shakes. You say, stranger, that our cappin knows you?"

"Yes!" said the sheriff, meekly, beginning to feel somewhat dubious of his securities.

"Well, hev' you any way to let him hear from you, by any writing or letter. For, as for seeing him afore he hears all about you, that's onpossible!"

The sheriff produced a pencil, tore off a bit of paper, from a letter, wrote his name upon it, and offered it to the sergeant.

"Stick it on the eend of my sabre," said the wary soldier, not knowing how such a talisman, taken into his hands, might compromise his relations with the captain or the enemy.

"Now, Lance, git out, and take out the horse; then you carry this paper, jest as it stands, to the cappin; I'll keep guard on this pusson, in the meantime, when you're gone."

A few moments sufficed for this performance, and Frampton set off, bearing the missive at the point of the sword, and leaving Millhouse, pistol in hand, confronting the visiter. The latter made a movement as if to get out; but the sergeant, with a horrid voice of war, cried out—

"Don't you stir a peg, enless you wants me to blow a winder through your buzzum! Jes' keep quiet whar you sir, ef you wants an easy time of it!"

And he followed up the terrible threat by a wilful obtrusion of the huge pistol, jaws wide open, full into the gaping jaws of the doubtful visiter. The sheriff recoiled, as well he might. He was half afraid now to move a limb, although, just then, it occurred to him that the ends of certain legal documents, of considerable size, were peering too conspicuously from a breast pocket; and he feared, if remarked, it would scarcely be possible for him to escape the imputation of being the much-hated officer

for the hostile reception of whom these men were in arms. He finally attempted the thing once, but, as he lifted his hand to his bosom, Millhouse mistook it for an attempt to get at his weapons, and he instantly applied his own. Again was the huge muzzle of the pistol clapped to the sheriff's head with an awful injunction—

"Ef you lifts a hand, or stirs a peg, stranger, you swallows a bullet that no white man can chaw. I've been in the army, too long, my friend, to let the inimy git his hand fairly into his buzzum. Jest you try it ef you wants to see how I manages in sich a case. Jest you try it, ef you'd see blazes to shet up both your eyes."

The sheriff resigned himself submissively to the necessity. The sergeant, clearly, was not a sentinel to be trifled with; and the prisoner, beginning honestly to wish himself well out of the present predicament, was now afraid to relax the stiffened limb, to ease out leg or arm, knee or elbow, lest he should incur the sudden penalty of blow or bullet. He remained thus in a most uneasy state of rest, which was anything but repose, waiting, with anxiety, for the return of the more civil of his two captors.

CHAPTER LVII.

COUP DE THEATRE.

When Lance Frampton entered the house with the paper of the sheriff, addressed to Pergy, and which contained only the name of the former, the captain of partisans was preparing himself for dinner, which Tom, the cook, was himself about to place upon the table.

"Where's Pomp, Tom?" demanded the captain.

"Pomp dey somewhere; dey tak' care ob hese'f, I 'speck," replied Tom, with a significant jerk of the head.

"Somewhere! Taking care of himself! Why, what the d—l is he after, and why don't you call him in to his duty? You should see, Tom, that the scamp does not skulk too fre-

quently. He has too much taste for it, as is, perhaps, the case with all fiddlers. Halloo for the scamp, and see that he is at his post. Take care of himself, indeed! I'll see that he takes care of me."

"He no gwine yer holler dis time, maussa!" answered Tom. "Nebber you min' maussa; he will come jis when we wants 'em; only jis now, he sca'ce [scarce]!"

"But we want him *now*!"

"Can't come *now*, maussa! Pomp in de swamp, safe shet up. Nobody for sh'um [see him]!"

"In the swamp! What the d——l is he after in the swamp?"

But the farther dialogue was arrested by the appearance of Frampton, very much to Tom's relief, since he could not much longer have evaded the direct demands of his master, while Millhouse had enjoined upon him silence. To let the reader into a secret, all the negroes had taken to the swamp, except Tom, from the moment when the sheriff's chaise had been arrested at the entrance of the avenue.

"Well, Lance; in armor still? What's the matter?"

"We've captured a man here, captain, who calls himself Col. ——, and says you know him. He sends you this."

Porgy read the slip.

"Col. ——; and you've captured him, you say? How?—Why?"

Frampton told his story briefly.

"Why, you see, we're on duty; and we thought he was the sheriff, and so we took him into captivity. The sergeant's standing guard over him, while I brought you the paper."

"Captured him! And where is he?"

"In the avenue. You can see him through the window, where the sergeant has him under guard."

Porgy looked out, and burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter.

"Ha! ha! ha! Good, i'faith! excellent! The captor in captivity! Ha! ha! ha! Well, this is promising! The game begins well. We shall have a laugh on our side, at least, whether we lose or not in the long run. Ha! ha! ha!"

The captain made the lieutenant repeat the details—the dialogue—every particular; and the merriment of the captain was

renewed. The whole thing struck him amusingly. It appealed to his leading passion for practical jokes. He determined to humor it to the end.

"So, you thought Col. —— the sheriff did you? Ha! ha! ha! admirable! What a story to tell! But, I will go out to him. I must only put a few extra dishes on the table. Here, Tom!—And now, Lance, step out to the sergeant; tell him to watch his prisoner closely. I will come out and see if he is really the colonel, whom I know very well! We must not be imposed upon, Lance! By no means! Ha! ha! ha! The captor in captivity! Very good, by Mercury, very good!"

Lance Frampton disappeared; perfectly satisfied that the captain approved of all his proceedings; a matter of which he had not been quite sure previously. When he was gone, Porgy, with Tom's assistance, proceeded to put himself in caparison of war. His uniform was hastily hustled on, his belt girded about his waist, sword slung at his side, pistols stuck in his belt, and in his hand he carried a long rifle. This done, he proceeded to arrange certain mysteriously-covered dishes upon the table. Tom was also made to equip himself in armor—that is, with a light tomahawk over his shoulder, a huge *couteau de chasse* in one side of his belt, and a great horseman's pistol in the other. Porgy gave him some final directions, and then sallied forth to examine the prisoner.

Before he appeared, the sheriff had begun to meditate the propriety of declaring his indignation, in very strong language, at the treatment he received; but, at the approach of Porgy, looking swords, bayonets, and blunderbusses, his purpose changed.—Was the captain crazy? Could he really mean to defy the laws? The colonel began to have his doubts. He had heard of the mad freaks of which Porgy had been occasionally guilty; he had heard that he was very free in his potations; he saw nothing but savage defiance in the features of Millhouse, and nothing but sober soldier resolution, and dogged adherence to authority, in the aspect of Frampton. The gown began to tremble in the presence of the sword. "I must temporise!" was the unspoken decision of the sheriff, "I must see how the land lies first! Who knows what desperate actions these mad fellows may not commit."

Porgy came on slowly, as became his size and state. As he approached, the sheriff made a movement as if to rise.

"Not a step, stranger!" cried the vigilant Millhouse, holding up the yawning pistols. "Wait tell the cappin gives the word."

The captain seemed slow to give the word. He drew nigh with the air of a man who felt that he might, at any moment, be required to pull trigger. His rifle was held in readiness, his finger near the trigger. He walked up to Millhouse, and looked suspiciously at the vehicle.

"Who have you got here, sergeant?"

The sergeant saluted, in military style, flourishing the pistol instead of the sword, as he answered—

"A fellow who calls himself Col. ———, but I don't know. He mout-be, and mout-be not, the colonel. But he says he knows you, and you knows him."

Porgy advanced a pace, and peered suspiciously into the vehicle, still keeping a very deliberate step, and a severe suspicious aspect. The sheriff cried out—

"What, Capt. Porgy, don't you know me?"

"Bless me, so it is! It is Col. ———. My dear colonel, I am truly rejoiced to see you, and greatly regret that my fellows should have subjected you to 'durance vile' for a single moment. It was all a mistake. Get out, if you please. They took you for some d——d harpy of the law—the sheriff or some one of his vile myrmidons. Get out, my dear fellow, and let us hurry in to dinner. You are just in pudding-time."

"He evidently does not know that I have been made sheriff," was the silent whisper of the colonel to himself, as, accepting the invitation, he descended from the vehicle, which Porgy immediately told Frampton to drive up to the house.

"We have but one single negro on the place," said Porgy; "at sight of you, supposing you the sheriff, every two-legged animal, of dark complexion, took to the swamp. You gave them a scare, I assure you. But come, I am really glad to see you at Glen-Eberley, and just at this moment."

And he shook hands with the sheriff, with the cordial army shake, which threatened to dislocate a member in order to compel remembrance. The sheriff felt a little relieved, even while

the stage was so rough. They walked toward the house arm in arm

"Let me carry your rifle, captain," said the sheriff.

"My rifle! No, indeed, colonel, no! I never part with it. I know not at what moment I may have to use it. There is a skunk of a Scotchman in my neighborhood, who may cross my path some day, and, as I tell you, I am in momentary expectation of the visits of the sheriff, or some of his satellite harpies."

"But you certainly would not draw trigger upon an officer of the law?"

"Would I not!" exclaimed the captain, suddenly stopping in his march, withdrawing his own arm from that of the other, and confronting him with a stern expression. "Would I not?—Will I consent, after fighting the battles of my country for seven years, to be driven from my estates by a d——d civilian—a fellow, probably, who never smelt gunpowder in his life. No! indeed! I will die in harness and in *possession!* They may conquer me—I suppose they will, in time; but I will hold on while I can, do battle to the last, and when they do take possession, they shall walk into it only over my dead body."

"And here's the man to baick you, cappin, by the Lord Harry!"

Such was the speech, delivered with stentor-lungs, from the rear; the sergeant at the same moment amusing himself with thrusting back his sabre into the steel sheath, with such an emphasis, as to make it ring again. The sheriff was startled from his propriety, for a moment, by the sudden illustration which followed the captain's fierce determination.

"They are all mad together," he again whispered to himself; and it might be observed that his deportment became more conciliatory than ever.

"Come, colonel, let us in, now, and see what dinner we shall find awaiting us. A stoup of Jamaica will refresh you after your ride, and me after my scare. The very idea of a sheriff makes me thirsty, and to be relieved of this idea, I must drink. Come! In!"

And the captain seized his guest good-naturedly by the arm, and the two ascended to the piazza, the sergeant thundering with heavy tread behind, his sabre sheath rattling against the steps

at every stride, and reminding the sheriff, momently, of the military nature of the escort. When in the house, he threw off his hat, and Porgy discarded his military cap; the squirrel-skin covering of Millhouse was doffed also, and the three joined in a devout draught of Jamaica. But neither of the two latter laid aside his weapons. The swords still swinging at their sides, and the pistols at their belts.

Meanwhile, dinner was announced, and the captain of partisans motioned the sheriff to a seat at one end of the table, he preparing to take the place opposite. The sergeant sank into a seat on one side. Once seated, the captain unsheathed his sabre, which he laid across the table, the hilt convenient to his grasp. The sergeant followed the example, only substituting his lap for the table. Lance Frampton came in at this moment, took a place opposite the sergeant, and, seeing what the latter had done with his weapon, made a similar disposition of his own.

The sheriff saw these proceedings, which seemed habitual, with increasing surprise. "Certainly," he again whispered himself, "these people are all mad!" The reflection increased his observances, and made him studious to maintain the utmost propriety of demeanor. He looked about him, and curiously surveyed all that came within the range of his vision. We have not hitherto thought it necessary to mention that, with the borrowed money of Mrs. Eveleigh, the captain had succeeded in furnishing his house with some regard equally to comfort and display. The want of money in the city when he entered the market, and the number of families who were selling out, had enabled him to procure a complete outfit at small cost. He no longer dined upon the floor, carpeted with blanket. He had now ample supplies of chairs and tables; there were mirrors against his walls, and fine linen upon his table. There was no display of plate, it is true, beyond the necessary allowance of spoons, but his china was quite imposing, and would be considered so now. His decanters and tumblers were of cut-glass, and the covers to his dishes were of very handsome plating.

When the dishes were uncovered, it was with increasing surprise that the sheriff beheld one, within reach of Porgy, containing a pair of highly-polished pistols. He attempted something of a jest when he saw them.

"Really, captain, you can not design that dish for the digestion of any visiter."

"The digestion must depend upon himself," was the cool reply; "but there *are* parties, who might sometimes intrude upon me, for whose special feeding they are provided."

"What! the sheriff, eh?" with a faint chuckle.

"Exactly! Shall I help you to soup, colonel?"

"If you please."

"Bouillé!"

"Thank you—a little."

"You will find it more manageable than bullet."

"Yes, indeed!"

"Try a little of that Madeira with your soup. It improves it wonderfully to my taste. Tom!"—tasting—"you have not put quite enough salt in your soup?"

"Who say so? Enty I know? Tas'e 'em 'gen, mausse! I 'speck you fin' salt 'nough in 'em next time. Heh! Ef I sin't know, by dis time, how for salt de soup, I t'row 'way heap of my life for not'ing."

"Hear the rascal. He knows that he doesn't belong to me, or he would never be so impudent. How are negroes selling now, colonel? I got a hundred guineas for that fellow."

"You were well paid, captain. At his time of life, unless a fellow had some rare qualities, he could scarcely command more than half that money."

"Tom *has* rare qualities. He *can* cook a good dinner; can make and season soup to perfection, and would have done so today—would certainly never have thrown in too little salt—but that he heard some talk of the sheriff, and in his agitation and the hurry with which he armed himself with his favorite weapons—see the knife and the hatchet—he has been careless with his salt—has probably spilt half of that in the fire which he intended for the soup. How does it taste to you, colonel?"

"Right, sir; very good soup, and well seasoned. I should say that your cook has salted it sufficiently."

"T'ank you, sah," quoth Tom. "I mos' hin 'fear'd I spill some ob de salt, when I yer 'bout dem warmint, de sheriff; but ef you tas'e 'em, da's 'nough. Salt sass'n't be too sharp in soup for he good sass'ning."

From the soups they passed to the solids. There was a round of beef. There was a pair of wild ducks. The sheriff began to recover his confidence with his appetite, and to praise Tom's cooking. Porgy watched and listened to him with a grim pleasure. Occasionally, the sergeant put in, with some of his philosophies, whenever anything particularly provocative had been said, but it may be stated that he was particularly taciturn that day. The fact is, the conduct of the captain was somewhat mysterious. The guest was inoffensive — was clearly not the sheriff — yet he saw that Porgy was playing out a game upon him — whether for the purpose of alarming the stranger's fears, or amusing himself, he could not determine; but the doubt kept him fiercely suspicious, and watchful of every look and movement of the guest.

The sheriff noted the man's air and manner, and was impressed accordingly. The conduct of Lance Frampton, who was singularly quiet, was yet of a sort to fix his attention. In this young man he beheld a fixed confidence in his superior, and a readiness to obey orders, which showed that, at a wink, he would be prepared to act, and without any regard to responsibilities. After awhile the wine began to circulate, though the sergeant still confined himself to the Jamaica. Even when, at the summons of the captain, he emptied his glass of Madeira, he was sure to swallow a good mouthful of the rum after it, as if to prevent any evil consequences from the more aristocratic liquor. The dishes were cleared away, and Tom gave the party a rice-pudding, which was voted good on all hands. Its removal was followed by the introduction of raisins, ground-nuts (*peanuts* or *pindars*), and black walnuts. Over the wine and walnuts, the chat grew more and more lively. It passed from topic to topic; the town and country; the camp and court; civil life and that of the soldier; but there was one lurking trouble in the mind of the sheriff which invariably brought him back to the peculiar condition in which he found the household.

"Really," said he, "captain, I find it impossible to realize the assurance that you make me, that you are all armed and equipped here to resist the operations of the law."

"Indeed!" said Porgy, looking grave. "You find it difficult to understand, and why? Is it so strange that I should be un-

willing to surrender all my possessions, at the first demand, and without a struggle."

"But you could scarcely expect to make resistance to the laws of the land. The sheriff is armed with a sovereign power for the time. How would you hope to hold out against him?"

"You mean to say that he would overwhelm me with the *posse comitatus?*"

"Ay, and if need, call out the military!"

"To be sure he may, and certainly there is a power to which my own must succumb. What, then? If I am to yield up all the goods of life, why not life also? What is life to me? You know my tastes and habits. You know how I have lived and how I still live. Some men will tell you that I am a glutton, others, that I imbue my appetites equally with my taste and philosophies; all agree that I am, essentially, a good deal of an animal—that I was profligate in youth that I might enjoy life, and that in the good things of this life, I find life itself. I won't deny the charge. Be it so. Am I to survive the good things, and yet cherish the life? Wherefore? What does Shylock say—whom, by-the-way, I take to be a very shrewd and sensible fellow, and a greatly ill-used rascal—

——'You take my life
When you do take the means whereby I live!'

And, when I have perilled my life a thousand times for the benefit of other people's goods, shall I not venture it for the protection of my own?"

"But, my dear captain, there is a material difference between doing a thing with the sanction of the law, and in defiance of it."

"None to me! Don't you see, my dear colonel, that I am prepared to sacrifice my life with my property, and that law can in no way, exact a higher forfeit? But d—n the law! We've had enough of it for the present. Fill up your glass. You will find that Madeira prime. It is from an ancient cellar!"

"Thank you! [Fills.] Well, my dear captain, suffer me to hope for you an escape from the clutches of the law by legitimate means!"

"I'm obliged to you, my dear colonel; but we army men don't care much about the means, so that we effect the escape. I am for stratagem or fight, sap or storm, just as the best policy coun-

ells. Life, after all, is a constant warfare. Rogues are only enemies in lambskins, or ermine. They do not care to cut my throat so long as I have a purse to cut; they will not care to drive me to desperation, so long as it is profitable to them that I should live. I know them! I defy them! I can die without a grunt to-morrow. I have neither wife, nor child, nor mother, nor sister, to deplore my fate, or to profit by my departure. I am, with the exception of these two faithful comrades of mine, utterly alone in the world. They shall live with me while I live. They would die for me to-morrow. Were a man but to lift a finger against me, to assail my life, or my meanest fortunes, they would be into him with bullet and bayonet, and need not a signal from me."

"That's a righteous truth, by the Hekies!" exclaimed the sergeant, with his one fist thundering down upon the table. The lieutenant's eyes brightened keenly, and he looked to the captain, but he said nothing.

"I have no doubt they are true and faithful friends, captain," said the sheriff; "but suppose now, only suppose, I say, the sheriff was suddenly to appear among you, just as I am here now, and were to—"

He was stopped! Stopped in an instant, as by a thunderbolt, by the prompt reply and action of Pergy.

"Suppose the sheriff in you! Ha! suppose the rest for yourself.—See!"

And with the wild but determined look and action of a desperate man, he seized both pistols lying in the dish before him, stood up, reached as far over the table as he could, and covered the figure of the amiable but indiscreet sheriff with both muzzles cocking the weapons as he did so. The sheriff involuntarily dodged and threw up his hands. At the same instant, and as soon as the purpose of the superior had been understood by Millhouse and the lieutenant, they were both upon their feet—the sergeant swinging his sabre over the head of the supposed offender; while Frampton, more silent, but quite as decided, while he swung his sword aloft with one hand, grasped with the other the well-powdered shock of the sheriff, in an attitude very like that which we see employed by the ferocious Blue Beard in the opera, when the poor wife is tremblingly crying out for

her brother. Here was an unpremeditated *coup de théatre!* Two swords crossed in air above the victim,—two pistols, with each broad muzzle almost jammed against his own; every eye savagely fixed upon him, and all parties seeming to await only the farther word of provocation from his lips. Nothing had been more instantaneous. The subordinates were machines, to whom Porgy furnished all the impulse. Their action followed his will, as soon as it was expressed. There was no questioning it, and the amiable sheriff was so much paralyzed by the display, that it was only with much effort that he could cry out—"But, my dear captain, don't suppose me the enemy—the assailant—the d——d sheriff or any of his myrmidons."

"By no means, colonel; but you supposed a case in order to see whether, and how, we were prepared for it; and it was essential that you should have a proper demonstration. You have seen; be easy; fill up your glass, my dear sir, and forgive my merry men here for the earnestness with which they performed their parts. They had no reason, indeed, to suppose that I was not serious. You see what chance a *bona-fide* sheriff would stand, if he aimed at any showing here!"

Porgy had resumed his seat, and restored the pistols to the dish as coolly as the actor, who takes his brandy and water, equal parts, after strangling his wife, stabbing the traitor, and dying famously in the person of Othello. It was not so easy for Millhouse to throw off his tragic aspect. He resumed his seat slowly, never once taking his eyes from the colonel's face, as he did so; and during the whole progress of the feast, he continued to regard him with only half-reconciled senses.

CHAPTER LVIII.

LEGAL REGIMEN.

THE excellent sheriff no longer felt any call to trespass in experiments upon the legal antipathies of the captain of partisans and his observant follower. He steered wide of all allusions from thenceforth to the officer of the law, and his possible appearance in the precincts. He felt really impressed with the danger of any one who should, with *malice prepense*, do so, in the evidently diseased condition of mind and mood prevailing at Glen-Eberley. That he should thus forbear, however, was by no means agreeable to his self-esteem or his sense of duty. He was uncomfortable when he thought of his official station, and the sealed documents in his pockets. He had come there to make a levy on land and negroes, without dreaming that he should encounter any opposition. Resistance, with force of arms, was entirely beyond his imaginings; and to depart, having done nothing was at once a *lacheese* of duty and a personal mortification. More than once he felt like plucking up his drowning courage, and perilling his life upon his manhood — boldly challenging the danger, and facing it with folded arms of defiance; but, on all such occasions, as if Porgy and his followers knew, by instinct, his emotions, there would occur some explosion, or some symptom of explosion, which would remind him vividly of the smouldering volcano upon which he sat. For example, he once made an allusion, deliberately designed, to M'Kewn; and Millhouse flared up, and fumbled his sabre, and gnashed his teeth, even as the Frenchman when he cries, "Sacre!" through his mustache, or the Spaniard when he growls "Demonios!" and flourishes his dagger. Frampton showed similar signs of impatience — while Porgy exclaimed aloud, striking his fist down upon the table:—

"Don't mention that scoundrel's name in my hearing, colonel! I feel wolfish when I hear of him. Let him but cross my path;

let any of his myrmidons but put themselves in my way, and if I do not crop their ears, close to the head, then there's no edge to any weapon in my household."

"But is he not a neighbor, captain?"

"Neighbor! Well, sir, I suppose you may call him a neighbor, even as the devil is a neighbor, and is said to take free lodgings in every man's dwelling; but such neighborhood does not prevent us from flinging the wretch out of the windows, whenever our good saints give us the necessary succor. Don't speak of such a scoundrel to my ears, or I may do you the injustice to suppose you are his friend."

The sheriff took the warning, and M'Kown was dropped, and all subjects were dropped which were likely to stir up the bile and black blood in the bosoms of the host and his companions. The sheriff resigned himself to his fate, and to the policy of doing nothing with as much grace as possible. He was not only frightened from the purpose for which he came, but the feeling of good fellowship momently grew stronger with the circulation of the wine, and the excellent spirits of the captain. The latter, in all respects, except the one, was on his best behavior, and in most amiable temper. He never showed himself more really humorous and delightful as a companion in all his life. The sheriff was charmed and listened. He was soothed and satisfied. His philosophy came into the support of his necessity. He reasoned thus, accordingly:—

"There is no need to push the matter! Porgy's estate is good, at any moment, for this debt. Every day increases the value of both lands and negroes. Were I to seize and sell now, the property would be sacrificed. It would pay the debt, but leave nothing over to the good fellow, who has been serving his country in a long and honorable warfare. D—n the fellow! I like him, and he shall have indulgence as long as I can grant it!"

As soon as he had reached this conclusion, and resolved that his visit should no longer have a professional object, the play was easy. He yielded himself up to the society in which he found himself. He felt the charm of his host's fun and philosophy; and he, too, had good things in his keeping. When he had once resolved to sink the sheriff, he gave himself free scope, let himself out, and became, what he was known to be in the army, a

really good fellow, of no savage inclinations, fond of a jovial circle, and capable of making himself the life of it. The day passed and the party of four had not left the table. They had raised their clouds around it; all being smokers except the lieutenant. Coffee was served by Tom, in the midst of the cloud. When the coffee disappeared, the Jamaica and the Madeira were restored. Cards followed, and at twelve o'clock at night, the sheriff rose a loser of some thirty shillings to sergeant Millhouse, who played through the hands of Frampton, and who became more and more reconciled to the suspicious guest with every shilling which the latter yielded. When, next morning, after the colonel's departure,—which took place soon after an early breakfast—he was discounting of his good qualities, his companionable virtues, and so forth, the captain of partisans laid his hand on his shoulder—

"Ah! Millhouse, but you don't know the man."

"What! he's Col. ——, aint he?"

"Yes."

"And a main good fellow, I say."

"Well enough;—well enough; but—your ear, sergeant."

The latter yielded it; the captain stooped as if to whisper—then in deep, solemn accents, as if drawn up from immeasurable depths, he cried out—

"THE COLONEL IS THE SHERIFF!"

The sergeant made but one bounce, and was across the room; his countenance wo-begone with surprise amounting to terror. His involuntary utterance, occasioned equally by what he had heard, and the tone of voice employed in telling it, was characteristic of his early attention when at church service.

"Hairk from the tombs! The sheriff, cappin!"

"The sheriff!"

"What! *our* sheriff, what's a-coming a'ter *our* goods and chattels."

"The same!"

"Oh! ef I'd ha' knowed it!—I'll be a'ter him!—Lance!"

"No! Do nothing of the kind! We've got off, thus far, very well. The joke is a good one, upon which I can feed fat with laughter for a month. I must ride over and tell the widow. How her sides will shake!"

"The sheriff! It's *impossible*, cappin! And he 'haved himself so civil and sensible, and never said a thing about the d—d execution!"

"No, indeed! the pistols looked too full of *executions* of a more serious sort, to say nothing of your two-foot sabre, and your monstrous ferocity of visage, sergeant."

"Ha! ha! ha!—ho! ho! ho!—haw! haw! haw!"

The whole story became very slowly apparent to Millhouse; but when he did receive it fully, the house was made to shake with his wild yells of laughter. Lance Frampton was perhaps more keenly sensible to the force of the jest, but he permitted himself, at best, a quiet chuckle only in a corner. It was in the midst of a torrent of Millhouse's yells, that Porgy had his horse saddled, and rode over to the widow Eveleigh, to whom he recounted the little drama, from the first scene to the last, with inimitable effect. The widow did laugh; dignity, in those days, did not deny the privileges of an honest cachination even to nobility; and, we are constrained to admit, as had been predicted by Porgy, that her sides did shake; but not vulgarly, or with too ostentatious a display of the commotion within and without. It was a lady-like show of shaking which did not discredit, in the least, the social claims and bearing of the fair widow. But when she recovered herself from the shaking of the sides, she shook her head, and, with becoming gravity, said:—

"But, captain, is not this flying in the face of the law? Will this not compromise you seriously?"

"By no means, my dear widow," he answered merrily; "the law never showed its face to us for a moment. We have treated it with no discourtesy."

"But its messenger, the sheriff!"

"He never showed himself in that character."

"But that was due to your course—"

"Perhaps; but that course was not illegal. There is nothing penal in the case. If he allowed his apprehensions to get the better of his sense of duty, the more fool he. He has no right to complain and will be ashamed to do so. As for the law, we have done nothing against which the law can shake a finger."

"But the matter does not end here. The sheriff will of course come again, and—"

"I shall play out the play, my dear Mrs. Eveleigh, as it has begun. I must have the fish in full; and for the rest,—why, I will content myself with the proverb of the patriarch—'Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.' It will be time enough to look out for the bolt when we hear the thunder."

"Too late—the flash!"

"Precisely, my dear widow, precisely that! It is because the case is one against which no precautions can avail, that I choose to look out for the bolt after it strikes and not before. But, good-by, I must ride back and write to Pinckney all about this matter. He must share the fun. He will relish it, I know. I would he had been a spectator! The thing is indescribable;—only to be seen in the visages of Millhouse, Lance, and the sheriff, as the two crossed weapons over his head, and I faced him out of countenance with my unmuzzled bull-dogs. My dear widow, would you believe it, the innocent pups that looked so fiercely in the eyes of the sheriff, were toothless. There was no load in either. But, good-by; God bless you! I must get back in a hurry. I rode over only that you should enjoy the story."

The story, indeed, was quite too good a one to be quiet in any bosom. That very night Millhouse gave an entertainment to Fordham and the overseer of M'Kewn himself, when the narrative was given at length. M'Kewn's man relished it quite as much as did Fordham; and the next day, when M'Kewn sauntered out to his stables, he was duly enlightened upon the events occurring in his neighborhood. He had expected the sheriff at his house after or before the levy, and had he made it, the probability is that the night would have been spent with M'Kewn instead of Porgy. The former listened to his overseer without comment. He saw that the latter watched him furtively, to see what effect would be produced by the revelation. But he was disappointed. M'Kewn maintained the utmost immobility of countenance. He said nothing, spent the day as usual, but the very next, he had his carriage got and started off on a visit to the officer of the law. The sheriff was by no means surprised to see him enter his office; but the visit disquieted him.

"Have you proceeded in that business, colonel?—M'Kewn *versus* Porgy."

"Not yet, Mr. M'Kewn."

"But did you not visit Glen-Eberley for the express purpose, colonel?"

"No—not exactly! I wished to look about me, and judge of the securities. As I saw that the property would bring the money at any moment, I did not see the necessity of forcing it into the market, where it would be only sacrificed."

M'Kewn smiled significantly. The sheriff saw the smile. He understood it, and blushed to the ears. He saw that the secret of his reception had got abroad. He, at once, felt all the mortification to which it would expose him. He longed for M'Kewn to give him occasion of quarrel. He needed somebody on whom to expend his anger and vexation. But the Scotchman was too wary for this. He quietly said—

"I can not leave this matter to the discretion of anybody, colonel, however excellent his judgment. I must have my money; and I must require you to realise it as soon as it is practicable."

"But, Mr. M'Kewn, it will be the ruin of Captain Porgy!"

"That is his lookout, not mine;—not to realise *my* money, may be *my* ruin, colonel; I must require you to do your duty, sir. From this moment I shall look to you."

"Be it so, sir. There is a deputy. He shall be despatched at once upon the business."

M'Kewn looked round upon the person designated, and nodded his head approvingly. He knew Crooks—Absalom Crooks—of old, and respected him as one of the very best bull-terriers of the law—a broad shouldered, stout, short, little fellow, with no crook about him, except in his legs, which were bowed, so as to render the space between a very happy oval; while his arms hung out from his body at large range. He had a red head, red face, red whiskers, red waistcoat, and was tolerably well read in the law. M'Kewn knew his man and approved him.

"Crooks," said he—taking the deputy aside—"see well to this business;—get the negroes into your custody, and bring them right away with you. It shall be worth to you five guineas extra, as soon as the money is realized."

Crooks crooked the pregnant hinges of the knee, at these pregnant words, and promised solemnly.

"Hark you, Crooks; you are dealing with cunning fellows.

who will try all ways to scare you out of your duties; but don't allow yourself to be frightened."

"Frightened!" exclaimed Crooks,—"don't know how to be frightened, sir,—never learnt, sir—couldn't take that sort of education. Frightened! I'd like to see."

And Crooks looked his fiercest. In truth, he was not the man to be very easily made afraid. He was a fiery little fellow, all combustible; as ready to fight as eat, at any time, and though continually getting drubbed, as continually forgetting the event in the encounter with a new assailant. He readily undertook the mission, and felt a sort of personal pique against Porgy and his men, as they were supposed capable of inspiring such a person as himself with fear. The sheriff saw the deputy depart under secret instructions from M'Kown, with well founded apprehension. But he could do nothing to avert the danger. He had only to look anxiously for the progress of events. Of course, he was somehow curious to see how Crooks would fare at Glen-Eberley. He knew that the fellow had no fear, and his mind was distracted betwixt two points—

"Either he will succeed by boldness, where I failed through timidity, or Porgy and his fellows will do him serious harm.—In either case, should the facts about my visit be blown, what the d—l will be said of me?"

We must leave him to these annoying reflections, and accompany our deputy to Glen-Eberley. Mounted on a stout hackney accustomed to official dignity, Crooks made his way, with all diligence, to the scene of his anticipated labors. The documents were in his pocket, and, once armed with a formidable parchment, well scored with Gothic characters, and made terrific with seals of state, Crooks felt no sort of doubt of the uniform reverence which he should everywhere command. Crooks had never served in the wars, though pugnacious enough for all sorts of struggle; and he had no notion of any power which, for a moment, could gainsay or run counter to that of the law. The courts of law were, to his mind, scenes of far more imposing grandeur than any he had conceived of in earth or in heaven—a judge, in gowned black, was a more potent personage to him than was Rhadamanthus to the superstitious among the ancients; and, for a sheriff (the ambition of a deputy, or a constable, in

those days, never dared look so high as this office for himself; it was a stretch quite beyond the vulgar imagination in the first days of the republic), Crooks held him in as much veneration, or more, than he could hold any general of the army—unless, indeed, General Washington. He was yet to become familiar with a feudal baron, and to comprehend the extent of his authority.

He was encountered at the entrance of the avenue, precisely as his principal had been, by a man in armor. His first salutation was a seizure. He, who had done the seizing hitherto, was, in turn, seized upon. His hackney was suddenly brought up, by a short jerk, from a man springing out of the covert beside the gate of the avenue.

"Who are you?" was the unexpected demand, as the horse was backed upon his haunches, and a pistol held toward the head of the rider.

"Who am I?—I'll let you know before you like it. Let go my horse!"

"No fooling! Who are you? What are you after here? What's your business!"

"My business is my business, and you'll know it soon enough. By what right do you stop me? Do you want to rob me, you rascal."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth before a blow of the fist tumbled him out of the saddle. The horse bounced; the deputy rolled over for a moment; and Lance Frampton, for it was he, seized the opportunity to turn the steed into the enclosure. He thus obeyed the instinct of the partisan. He had captured a horse, and his first measure was to secure it. The next moment he looked after his prisoner. It was time; Crooks was already on his feet and making toward him. Frampton confronted him with his pistols. Crooks had nothing but his riding whip. This, he shook at his assailant, at a moderate distance.

"You shall sweat for this, you rascal. I am an officer of the law. I represent the county. I stand here in the sheriff's shoes, and resistance to an officer—an assault upon an officer—*vi et armis*,—with swords, pistols, dagger, knife, rifle, blunderbuss and gun, you rascal—is outlawry,—and you shall sweat for it. I tell you I stand here in the shoes of the sheriff.

"You do, do you? and if you stood in the jacket of the sheriff it wouldn't help you much. Turn in to the avenue, or I'll put a bullet into you. You're my prisoner."

"*Your* prisoner! Was ever the like? and me a deputy sheriff!"

"Get in, I tell you; you shall have a fair trial."

"Trial! Try me! Who the h--ll are you, sir?"

"Never you mind. Get in, and ask your questions of the captain."

"The captain! What! you mean Captain Porgy."

"Yes! Who else here?"

"The very man I want to see. I'll go in. It's not because I'm afraid of your pistols, young fellow; I don't care that for 'em [snapping his fingers], and you shall sweat for showing 'em to me; but I go in to see Captain Porgy. He's my man."

"Get in! I don't care what you go for, so that you go!"

Lance Frampton sounded his bugle, as the deputy entered the gate. Crooks went forward, venting his indignation at every step. He was suddenly stopped, midway in the avenue, by another man in armor. Lance and the new-comer saluted, and the prisoner was formally transferred from the former to the latter. Frampton proceeded toward the house. Crooks, staring at the gigantic figure, and frowning aspect of the new-comer, and greatly bewildered at the odd accumulation of uniform and armor about him, was, however, about to press forward, following his late assailant, when the sergeant suddenly arrested him.

"Stand where you are, fellow, or I'll be into you with something sharper than a baggonet."

And he flourished his sabre directly in front of the person of the deputy.

"The devil! What do you stop me for? Do you know who I am and what I've come for?"

"I've a notion," answered the sergeant, looking more fierce than ever.

"Do you know I am here for the sheriff; sent here to make a levy of all the lands, rights, titles, hereditaments, goods and chattels, niggers and stock, furniture and apparel, carts, wagons, ploughs, hoes, shovels, and all and every the implements of this plantation, to take and hold thereof, and make sale thereof, in

satisfaction of the judgment in the case of M'Kewn v. Porgy. Do you hear? Do you understand? And do you dare to arrest and stop me in the prosecution of this, my lawful duty."

"I thought as much!" said Millhouse, with an awful lowering of the brows, and a lurid smile in his eyes.—"I thought as much. And it is sich a little mean copper-headed son of a skunk, that has the impudence to come here and to seize the rightful property of a gentleman—and one too, who is a sigilar off'cer in the line of the army. I've most a mind to take hold of you and lace your jacket with hickories—I hev'!"

"Lace my jacket! Hickories! I dare you. Do your best. But you shall sweat for it. You shall, ef there's any law in this land."

"Don't provocate me with your law!" was the reply—"the very word 'law' makes me feel wolfish—the hair all growing innardly. Law, indeed! Shet up, you little polecat, or I'll mount you with sich a spur as will take all the red blood out of your hide in no time."

"I dare you! I defy you! You can't scare me with your big words and your bullets. Give me one of your pistols, and I'm willing to try a crack with you on the spot."

"You ain't! Well, ef you warn't a prisoner, I'd let you; but thar's no sense in granting we'pons to a prisoner."

"By what right do you make me a prisoner? By what right do you deprive me of my liberty, and stop me in the prosecution of my duty? Answer me!"

"Oh! shet up! When did you ever hear that the prisoner was to ax the questions? It's you that's to answer, and here comes the lieutenant. He'll tell you what the cappin says and what's to be done with you."

"Very well! I'll hear."

"You'll hev' a fair trial, I promise you."

"Trial! Who's to try me? I won't go! I'll not submit to any but a lawful court."

"And who's to ax you! Well, lieutenant?"

"The captain says bring the fellow before him."

"Come, copper-head! march!" and Millhouse, planting himself on one side of the captive, Frampton took his place on the other.

"I'll not march! I'll not go! Let the captain come here to me, if he wants me. I'm far enough on this place for what I've got to execute, and I charge and command you both, and all who hear me, as good citizens——"

"Shet up, you bawling warmint!" cried the sergeant, and he accompanied the words by thrusting the rough handle of his sabre quite across the jaws of the deputy. The other turned upon him fiercely, but was brought back, with a jerk, by the hand of Frampton, who, with a shove, forcibly bade him—"go ahead—on!" At the same moment, he was pricked keenly in the flanks by the tip of Millhouse's sword, and, looking to the lieutenant, he saw that of the latter ready to enforce his progress by similar arguments. This was sharp practice, and quite new to Crooks. The sweat stood full on the face of the little fellow; but he still cried out, with a tough spirit, burning with fury:—

"Oh! *you* shall both *sweat* for all this."

"Oh! very well! That's as it happens. Every man must hev' his turn. But it's for you to sweat first," and a renewed pricking of the sergeant's sabre threatened something worse than sweating.

"Oh!" groaned the deputy, as he obeyed the impulse and went forward. Several times he paused, making a new endeavor to hold his ground, and as often was he made to feel the spur. When he reached the house, he was forced up the steps, through the piazza, into the hall, then thrust down into a chair, with a hand of each of his attendants upon his shoulder.

"We've got him, cappin!" cried out Millhouse to Porgy in his chamber. The captain of partisans had been reaping the stubble field, the autumnal harvests of his chin, which were quite too grisly to be suffered to offend his own or other eyes. He came forth with coat off, sleeves rolled up, neck bare, and razor in his grasp. The moment he beheld the deputy, he cried out—

"Heavens! What a monster! What a horrible looking creature! What a beard. Coppery-red; a perfect jungle, and full, no doubt, of all sorts of diminutive beasts. Sergeant, we must have that fellow's beard off."

Millhouse absolutely shouted at the idea.

"Tom!" roared the captain. Tom appeared at the door. "Quick, Tom, soap and napkin; and take off that horrid beard."

Crooks would have bounded from his seat. He prided himself on his beard. It's coppery red, apparently so offensive to all about him, was to him the perfection of beauty, It's red he held to be that of roses, and as for the amplitude of it, its wild, wide-spread bushy dimensions, these he stroked a thousand times a day with an affection which may be imagined. To lose his beard, even in jest, was almost as bad as to lose his scalp. He now began feverishly to apprehend, that with such companions, he should lose both. He leaped up, but was immediately thrust back into his seat by the ready hands of his attendants.

"I won't submit to this. I tell you—I warn you—I am an officer of justice. I'm here under the great seal of the state. I'm on official duties. I'm under the sacred protection of the law."

"How horribly he shouts! But, with such a beard, what mortal man can talk like a human being. You don't understand a word he says, sergeant?"

"Not a word! I reckon it's a sort of nigger speech from Africa."

"Do you understand the savage creature, Lance?"

"I reckon's he's crazy, captain," answered Lance.

"Truly, I think so. He will need a strait jacket. But there's no judging rightly his condition till we take off that brush."

"Let's burn it off, cappin."

"No! no! he may be human, and that might hurt him. We'll shave it off, and then see what he really is. I suspect he belongs to the monkey species—he's an orang-outang;—you know what that is, sergeant."

"Hafe man, hafe horse, and two parts alligator, I reckin."

"You're very nigh the mark. Hurrah, Tom! make haste."

Tom made his appearance with basin, towel, soap, &c. The deputy seeing his danger, and that the affair was looking serious, made another effort to escape from the clutches in which he was held, and accompanied the effort by a fearful outcry, touching the terrors of the law. But in vain.

"Tie him down. Handkerchief, there, Tom. Secure him, so that he may not do himself harm. He is certainly very wild. He must have been only lately caught. Somebody must have put these clothes on him by force."

While the captain thus dilated, his assistants busied themselves in securing the deputy to his seat. His arms were tethered to the back of the chair, which was one of those massive mahogany receptacles so common at that period, and representing a much earlier period in the history of English civilization. The chair was, in fact, modelled upon the times of Elizabeth. Thus secured, with his head held back, the napkin tucked beneath his chin, Tom approached and proceeded to lay on the lather. The thick soapy mass was thrust *ad libitum* into mouth and nostrils. The deputy yelled, but as the soap made fearful progress into his jaws at every opening, he was, perforce, content to sputter, and sneeze, and kick and writhe. All efforts were unavailing. His captors were resolute in their fun. "Law!" he cried. "Lather!" cried Porgy; and Tom obeyed. Half suffocated, though more furious than ever, Crooks finally yielded, and Tom proceeded to apply the razor. Tom had acquired, in camp, the arts of the barber, as well as the cook. He was not so dextrous as determined. Crooks saw that it was at his own peril that he writhed, or twisted, or reared his head, or stuck out his chin unnecessarily. Tom would say quietly:—

"You only guine to wussen youse'f, buckrah—ef you is a buckrah—wid you kickings and cawortings. Better you keep youself easy, ef you don't want me for slice off you nose."

Here was a new peril. Slice off his nose! The loss of the petted beard was a great evil—but to lose his nose also, was such as it made him doubly sweat to meditate.

"Don't cut off his nose, Tom," cried Porgy, with a great air of concern. "This class of animals seldom have much to spare; and the loss of such a member, would really disfigure the face terribly."

"Lord, cappin, nothing could make such a critter more ugly than he is," answered Millhouse; "but he could lose an inch of snout and never miss it. Why, Lord, he's got a nose like a baggonet and a most hafe as long!"

Tom, meanwhile, prosecuted his labor with diligence. He was a bold cutter. It was all army practice with him—swift, slashing, reckless, not easily stopped by trifling impediments. At every swoop, Crooks found a wide waste of forest growth removed; huge tracts of warm furze disappeared, as the prairie

grass in autumn, under the fire. Soon, the entire wilderness of brush was cleaned up. The territory was now smooth, and the light let in upon a region that had not seen the day for half a dozen years. Crooks was no longer the same man; he felt cold about the chin; but his chill greatly increased when he heard Tom ask—

"Must tek' off he hair now, maussa? He look berry bad and ugly. I reckin he must be full of warmints."

Porgy seemed for a moment to meditate the matter; but he waived Tom off.

"No! that's enough, Tom, for the present. I think we may now make out the species of the animal."

"I'm the deputy sheriff—my name's Crooks."

"A well-known warmint, cappin. I reckon you mout as well skin him altogether. Jest you take off the scalp now, and we'll be sure to know him next time."

"No! no! It is not so much that we may know him, as that he may know us hereafter. I see what he is. Let him go now. I reckon he's tame enough for the present. Now, let him have a swallow of Jamaica."

"I drink nothing in this house!" cried the deputy rising to his feet.

"Then you lose the taste of a mighty good dram of liquor."

"And I warn you all—all three of you—that you shall answer for this assault and battery. You, Captain Porgy—I know you—and you, and you, I will have it all out of you three, if there's any law in the land."

"You won't drink," said Porgy.

"Not a drop with you, or in this house."

"Will you eat?"

"Not a mouthful!"

"Then we've done all that we can do for you, unless you desire that Tom should take off that shock. It is unnecessarily thick and long. Can that be hair?"

"Look you, Captain Porgy, I've submitted to your assaults and batteries because I could not help myself."

"A mighty good reason too!"

"But I will have redress. Now, sir, I will do my duty, and here I give you notice, that in the character of the Sheriff of—"

"Boo! woo! woo! woo! Shall I muzzle him, cappin?"

"No! let him go. Depart, my good fellow, while your bones are whole. We have done for you the best we could."

"I'll not go until I have made a levy upon all the lands and negroes, the goods and chattels of this estate of Glen-Eberley, under the authority of the papers which I now carry, and which I will read for the benefit—"

By this time he had drawn the documents out of his pocket.

"Beware how you attempt to read any of those vile heathen documents here," said Porgy, assuming an air of great sternness.

"State of South Carolina!" began the deputy.

"As surely as you attempt to read that paper, I will make you eat it!"

"Eat it! I'll eat nothing in this house!"

"We'll see to that."

"State of South Carolina—" resumed the deputy.

"Seize him," cried Porgy—"seize him!"

And, in the twinkling of an eye, Frampton caught Crooks in his embrace, and Millhouse set his enormous thumb and forefinger about his neck, and the deputy was forced back into his chair. The paper was snatched by the lieutenant from his hand.

"In the name of the state!" screamed the deputy.

"Feed him with it!" shouted Porgy.

"I levy and seize, distrein and take possession—" began the deputy at a rapid rate, but his mouth was suddenly filled with his documents. The execution was crammed into his jaws—a part of it at least; and the voice of the sergeant, in accents too clear and loud to be misunderstood, advised him what to do with it.

"Feed or suffocate, you skunk."

"You're choking me to death!"

"Feed, then! Chaw! Swallow!" And, at every word, the sergeant plied the unhappy deputy, with a fragment of the execution. It was in vain that he flounced and floundered, strove, kicked, and scuffled with his persecutor. The iron arm of Millhouse was seconded with an equally iron will, and, perforce, the victim was compelled to chew and mouth the musty document.

"My God! do you mean to kill me?"

"Not unless good feeding will do it. You love the law, you live

on it, and ought to be able to digest it. Give him another mouthful, sergeant. It must all be eaten. It is not too much for one meal."

With every bit offered, and finally forced upon the deputy, the same struggle followed, the same unavailing resistance. He was compelled to eat. Nothing but the seal remained. This was not then the fiction which it is in recent times. It was not then thought quite sufficient to write '*locus sigilli*,' and withhold the seal itself. In the present case this was a goodly circular plate of red wax, of some dimensions. It was now offered to the unwilling feeder. At the sight of it the fellow cried out with horror—"I can't eat that! It'll be the death of me. It's got poison in it."

"Ah! ha! is it so? And do you bring p'ison into a gentleman's family, and try to sarve it on him. Well, it's only your own medicine, my honey; you must eat it with the rest. The physic of a law paper kaint be good onless the seal goes with it. Bite! Eat! or I'll——"

But for the interposition of the captain, the sergeant would have persisted in testing to the utmost the capacities of Crooks' stomach. Fortunately, the former was disposed to more indulgence.

"Let him off," said he, "he's had enough. Now give him some Jamaica;—or, perhaps, you'll prefer an emetic, my good fellow, to produce reaction. I can have you a little tartar in a second."

"No! no!" cried Crooks with choking accents—"The rum! the rum!"

The liquor was poured out for him, and the glass put into his hands; as he was about to drink, Millhouse exclaimed—

"Ha! ha! I know'd you'd hev' to come to it at last. You swore you wouldn't eat or drink in this house. You've done both!"

The taunt was enough. The deputy dashed down the untasted liquor, smashing the glass upon the floor.

"Curse the house!" he cried, "and all that's in it!" and shaking his hand in fury, he broke through all restraint, and disappeared from the apartment.

"After him, boys, and see that he clears out. Attend him to the outposts, Lance! He will hardly venture back with other documents."

CHAPTER LIX.

M'KEWN AT HOME, AND THE SPECTRE THAT SIPPED HIS PUNCH.

THE captain had not fairly lost sight of the deputy before he began to reflect upon the enormity of the offence which he had sanctioned and committed. It was not so much that he had outraged the laws of the land, as that he had violated those of humanity. He began to feel ashamed of this, for, when not carried away by impulse, he would have revolted at everything like brutality, unless, as in the case of actual conflict in war, it took the form of a necessity. His successful jest with the sheriff, which had proved harmless, had prompted a renewal of the experiment; and, once committed to the joke, he had been hurried on by his first impulse, long after the matter had ceased to be mirthful. Though he said nothing of his misgivings to his companions, he yet felt very much ashamed of the affair, when the time had come for reflection. We may add that he did not, on this occasion, ride over to report the adventure to the fair widow. He would rather, indeed, that it should not reach her ears from any lips. But it got abroad nevertheless.

Crooks, as soon as he could mount his horse hurried at full speed over to M'Kewn's, to whom, boiling with fury, he described the whole affair. It did not need the exaggerations of language to render it hideous. M'Kewn was secretly pleased at the occurrence. It fastened an odium upon our partisan, whose patriotic services had otherwise made him popular. It left him more at the mercy of his creditor, by depriving him of those sympathies which his distresses would certainly have secured for him. But, M'Kewn did not suffer his secret thoughts, on this head, to reach the ears of the deputy. His indignation at the treatment which he had suffered, was expressed in language as warm and violent almost as his own, and, giving him a douceur of five guineas, he despatched him, the next day, with a letter to the sheriff, renewing his demand upon him for the immediate compliance with his duties.

The sheriff was naturally angry at the ill usage of his deputy. There was a great sensation in the city. Pinckney and Parsons, the friends and lawyers of Porgy, were in much confusion. They endeavored all they could at the arts of soothing. The shaving of the deputy they made very light of. Indeed, they affirmed it to be an act of kindness. The procedure, they insisted, had greatly improved Crooks's appearance; but the matter was quite too serious to be laughed out of court; and such a suggestion made Crooks, himself, more angry than ever. They found it politic, accordingly, to forbear this mode of treating the affair. The compulsory feeding to which the deputy had been subjected — the utter scorn and defiance of the law which had been shown by Porgy and his followers — were serious offences against the peace and dignity of the country, which most persons were inclined to resent. The sheriff talked of immediate processes of arrest — of the *posse comitatus*, — of a military force, — and of terrible penalties, forfeitures, and imprisonments!

To gain time was now the object with Porgy's friends, until the public indignation should subside; and they brought every possible influence to bear, which might, in any way, effect their purpose. It happened, fortunately, that Marion and Colonel Singleton were both in the city, and both anxiously busied themselves to rescue an old favorite and follower from his difficulties. They appealed to the sheriff for delay, at least until the affair could be inquired into peaceably. M'Kewn's debt must be satisfied, of course; — for this several parties were prepared to pledge themselves; — and it was supposed that the hurts of Crooks might all be cured by a sufficient salve in the guise of hush-money. These matters arranged, the irritated self-esteem of the sheriff might be soothed, and the damage done to the dignity of the laws might be repaired — as is commonly the case in a good democracy — by taking no sort of notice of it. With us, you may pull the nose of the law, at pleasure, but you must be prepared to pay well for any such liberty taken with the nose of its officer. Crooks, as yet, was quite unapproachable on the subject of his wrongs and injuries. It was supposed by Pinckney that he would continue unapproachable, until beard and whiskers had once more grown out to their former ravishing dimensions. Meanwhile, all proper efforts should be made to mollify him;

and, to effect this, Pinckney himself prepared to run up to Asheepoo, and see the captain, in order to bring him to reasonable apologies.

These negotiations necessarily occupied some time, during which Glen-Eberley was left free of molestation. The sergeant congratulated himself that a victory had been obtained. Porgy was less sure and satisfied. He had sobered down from his late excitement, and could see the state of affairs through the proper medium. He saw that the time would come when he should pay for his frolic; but, like most persons of his temperament, he preferred to postpone the consideration of the affair till the last moment—until, indeed it was forced upon him. Winter, meanwhile, was advancing rapidly. The nights of November were becoming very cold. Our captain of partisans was now in the full enjoyment of field sports, and was proving himself quite a Nimrod. His corpulence did not seem to lessen his appetite, or his vigor in the chase. Arthur Eveleigh, sensible of his fault, had become measurably reconciled to the captain, and he and Lance Frampton met at Glen-Eberley, once a week at least, to hunt. Porgy's sports, however, in the field, did not lessen the number of his visits to the two widows. He was still, as before—not to speak disparagingly of the sex in our comparisons—betwixt hawk and buzzard. This homely figure was one frequently in the mouth of the sergeant, in reference to the attitude of his superior, though he did not venture to obtrude it upon the ears of the captain. Both widows still seemed very gracious, and their looks of favor increased the impatience of Millhouse to effect his long cherished object.

"You might have either on 'em, I reckon, for the axing," quoth the sergeant; "though it's cl'ar that the widow Eb'leigh is the most loving critter of the two. It's a needcessity, cappin, that she should hev' you."

The frequent iteration of this assurance, finally made its impression upon our captain;—but, though half persuaded only, that Mrs. Eveleigh labored under the "needcessity" aforesaid, he felt, as a man of honor, that he could not approach her as a suitor, until he had paid her his debt—at all events, having extricated himself from the meshes of the law. "Then,"—he thought;—but it is proper we should not anticipate!

Meanwhile, what of the inexorable creditor, M'Kewn? Housed at his plantation like the great black spider, to which we have already likened him. surrounded by subtle snares of policy, and sly devices, and meshes of cunning, for taking in and securing the thoughtless flies of humanity—for making prey of all he could—he crouched in seeming quiet, most of the time unbeheld, in secret crevice, and when seen, seeming only to drowse, in the central circle of his innocent encampment. He was pleasantly satisfied with his progresses. What, with his own art, and Porgy's rash impulses, he felt that he had fairly involved that greatest of all his flies in a mesh from which there was no escape. All of his schemes appeared to prosper. Other victims were in his snares. His money bred as if under the direct management of Mammon—as if Mammon had become his private banker, and determined his loans and enterprises. He had made a good crop, and rice was rising in the market. He had bought, at moderate prices, a lot of *new* negroes, from the coast of Guinea, from a virtuous puritan captain, of Rhode Island, who had gleaned wonderfully from the gold coast, and whose great grand-son, by-the-way, has since shown himself a virtuous abolitionist in the senate of the United States, breathing hate and horror toward the descendants of the very people to whom his philanthropic grand-sire sold the stolen negroes. All M'Kewn's speculations seemed to be prosperous. All his apprehensions of Mrs. Eveleigh were relaxed in her continued silence. He had got over his fears of her, in the conviction which he felt that the seas rolled for ever between himself and the squatter Bostwick—perhaps, rolled *over* him; a fate which he preferred for his enemy, and which he rather thought he must have suffered, since he had no reason to doubt of the sagacity and fidelity of his creatures, Forbes, Drummond, and Barton.

Thus, with all his fears at rest, all his fortunes prosperous, all his victims in his meshes, all his enemies *hors de combat*, M'Kewn yielded himself up to his pleasures. Shall not his soul take its peace at last; shall he not reward himself for long abstinence and self-denial; shall he not feel himself in his place and power, in due self-atonement for a long and tedious career of sycophancy, and base submission to the moods of others? M'Kewn's best mode of reasoning taught him no higher aim or nobler phi-

losophy than this. He was prepared now to take his ease at his inn! He was preparing to look about him for a wife, such as a fortune, great as his, might reasonably command. He would have been pleased to lift the widow Eveleigh into that honored station; but the last interview which he had enjoyed with that lady, taught him the utter hopelessness of that object—taught him farther, that, though she could by no means establish the truth legally against him, she was yet morally possessed of evidence the most conclusive of his guilt. He kept heedfully from her sight accordingly; while, under a new impulse, young Arthur, whom he had labored industriously to corrupt, kept as heedfully from his.

Thus, apparently secure, thus measurably happy—satisfied with himself and his successes, or striving to be so—M'Kewn took his ease at his plantation, or wore, to other eyes, the appearance of one who did so. He lived well, sought the neighboring planters, emulated their hospitality, was frequently a visiter abroad, and as frequently entertained his guests at home. He gave good dinners, indulged in choice wines, and, being a man of the world, who had enjoyed a considerable experience, and was naturally intelligent, he proved, in most cases, a very excellent companion among the persons whom he was pleased to seek.

It was a cold and cloudy day, late in November, when a party dined with him. They were all good fellows, the dinner was served up in excellent style, the wines were fine, the dessert in good taste, and the enjoyment of all parties extreme. They sat late—they drank freely. It was a bachelor's establishment, and song and story spelled the intervals between the several pledges. Soon, the wines gave way to stronger liquors. Old rum and fiery French brandy and genuine Scotch whiskey took the place, upon the board, of more courtly spirits. M'Kewn was famous at hot whiskey punch, and felt a sort of national pride and pleasure, presiding, with an antique Scottish bowl before him, of immense size, and the wooden ladle of curious carving in his grasp, and the little silver tankard smoking before each guest, while their lips smacked with delight, and their tongues grew thick with the language of unintelligible compliment—the more grateful as unintelligible. The company dispersed at a tolerably late hour, going home with no conscious-

ness of dark or danger, shouting as they went, and fortunate in drivers, or horses, who had enjoyed no such pleasant privileges of punch as themselves. M'Kewn was left alone to his own fancies. He summoned the servants, ordered that the remains of the vessel of punch should be taken into his chamber, and, a fire having been already kindled there, repaired thither himself.

The night was dark and cold, but the room was bright and warm. Too bright, was the thought of M'Kewn, since he extinguished the wax candles both, which the negro had left burning, satisfied with the sufficient blaze of the lightwood brands cast upon the fire, and of which an adequate supply stood ready always in a box upon the hearth. M'Kewn sat in front of the fire, his slippered feet presented to the blaze. His sensations were decidedly comfortable. He was in affluence; his health was good; he was yet a comparatively young man; at least on the sunny side of fifty. He might reasonably calculate, according to existing probabilities, upon a long term of enjoyment. In spite of the awkward doubts in certain quarters, he was able to command good society. If he could not claim entrance into one circle, he had a very tolerable refuge in another. He had wealth, and wealth can always buy society, though it may command neither real respect, nor affection, for its possessor. The people who had spent the day with him were all people of excellent standing. Good fellowship made them flexible. They sneered at M'Kewn himself; but they entertained a very genuine respect for his dinners. There were some of them who aimed at something beyond his dinners—who, perhaps, would scarcely have permitted themselves to dine with him but for their occult objects. These persons had maiden sisters or daughters, of a rare and virtuous antiquity, whom, for their especial claims to admiration, they desired to see framed in settings of gold. They patronized M'Kewn to this end—no more. The Scotchman readily saw through their schemes, grinned in secret over their absurdities, but did not discourage those hopes by which he secured himself in *good* society. Sitting by his now solitary hearth, he mused with great complacency, thinking upon these and other matters. The affair of Porgy and the deputy sheriff had been brought upon the *tapis* during the day, and had been discussed with great frankness on both sides of the question, as in

the way commonly with our impulsive planters of the parish country. Some of them, most desirous of conciliating M'Kown, were loud in their denunciation of the violent and illegal proceedings of the captain of partisans. Others chuckled over it as a rare and admirable jest which furnished quite an excellent example to all future creditors. Others went further, and, moved by very earnest sympathies with the debtor, professed to regard any innovation of a man's household, on the part of a creditor, or his legal representative, to be a most impertinent intrusion, justifying any severity of treatment. M'Kown heard all, and smiled in all directions, satisfied, at the close, to say, in a costive manner—

"Let him settle with the sheriff as he may, gentlemen; he will have to settle with me! He may struggle, but can't escape me. In three months, at least, there will be an end of him, and the jest will be on the other side. They always laugh who win; and if the loser has the mood to laugh, why, we may safely suffer him to indulge it."

And it was with this conviction of ultimate conquest,—the final overthrow of his insolent debtor—that M'Kown would chuckle to himself, sipping at his whiskey-punch the while. Of this popular beverage, whose virtues lie always below the surface, and penetrate much more than skin deep, M'Kown had a snug silver pitcher, long necked, of vase fashion, and silver lidded, standing conveniently beside him on a table;—moderate measures were poured out as he wanted it, into the tumbler beside him. He stirred and sipped, and, tumbler still in hand, drew nigher to the blaze; and, after a little while, and as his feet began too much to warm before the fire, he threw them up against the mantelpiece, throwing them wide apart, so that the whole panorama of the fire, the smouldering ruins, the blazing piles, were all present to his eye through the frame work of his parted thighs. His head was cast back, the lids of his eyes drawn down; he watched the fire as through a microscope, taking in its small details. His chair, a heavy one of mahogany, with a great back, was nicely balanced on its hind legs. The tumbler, half filled with the grateful beverage, was as nicely balanced in his hands. His mind had reached that condition of repose which brings about pleasant reveries. M'Kown saw his future through

a magic medium. His enemies were overthrown, his course was triumphant, his wealth underwent hourly increase, the magnates of the land were subservient, he himself had become a magnate; and his eye had only to determine which of the several beauties at his service, he should choose, to make his world an Eden.

Happy M'Kewn! The fates are busy always to beguile with pleasant auguries those whom they would involve beyond their depths. Sometimes, a speck would appear suddenly on the face of his magic mirror, a slight cloud pass over it, a lurid flash, and he could fancy distant thunder — in other words, images of Porgy and the widow Eveleigh, and the hateful Bostwick, and other persons, would recall to him suddenly a train of subjects suggestive of fear or difficulty; but M'Kewn found it easy to disperse these obtrusive shadows, simply by a renewed appeal to the warm whiskey-punch beside him. It was surprising how soon, after this application, the speck and cloud would disappear from the magic mirror which his fancy had polished so well for his contemplation.

Thus sitting, musing, dreaming, in that doubtful sort of consciousness which seems to be equally distant from absolute sleep or waking, M'Kewn thought he beheld the waving of an arm and hand before his half-shut eye. He fancied that some one had taken up the beaker of punch which, having sipped a little of the contents, he had just set down. But his energies were fast yielding beneath the sluggish happiness of his dreamy mood, and, though somewhat conscious of a movement, and even of a sound, he dismissed it as a natural suggestion of his revery itself, and never turned his head. A moment may have elapsed, or more, when, suddenly, a hand was laid heavily upon his shoulder. He unclosed his eyes, and stared. He was paralyzed. Was it true — was it a dream? Did he really behold the infernal squatter, Bostwick, once more? — or was it his drowned, thrice damned, and ever haunted and haunting ghost, emerging from the depths of the green sea, and following him on the mission of the furies! Was it the hand of a spectre or a living man that still rested upon his shoulder. Was there mortal speculation in those fiery red eyes that now stared terrifically down into his?

CHAPTER LX.

HOW THE SQUATTER MADE THE VOYAGE TO THE WEST INDIES

In the sight of M'Kewn nothing could be more distinct, more life-like than the spectre. He looked just as he had seen him a thousand times before; the same great red staring eyes, the same expression in the face, of a mixed savage and cunning nature, sly at once and desperate; the same small but sinewy figure; the same lounging, slovenly carriage; the same person altogether, except, perhaps, that each vicious quality of his face was exaggerated; the grin upon his mouth was more satyr-like; his eyes were blood-shot; his cheeks mottled with the long continued habit of intemperance: his skin bronzed to a copper, yet flushed as with the hues of a warm sunset. Was he indeed a spectre? Had the grave given up the dead? Had the seas thrown up their victim? Did the spectator really dream or not?

M'Kewn closed his eyes, and again opened them, thinking the fearful presence might then be gone. There it stood, and he could no longer doubt the solid pressure of its grasp upon his shoulder. The Scotchman was paralyzed. Dead or living, the appearance of Bostwick was now a terror. M'Kewn was almost in a state of collapse. The cold sweat had silently streamed out upon his face, his neck, his breast, his whole body. His feet, thrown up against the mantelpiece, sank down to the floor nerveless; his lips parted, but not for speech; only in silent consternation. But his frozen gaze never once fell from that of his fearful visiter. There, in utter silence, the one stood, the other sat, gazing full upon each other. Bostwick seemed to take a malignant pleasure in fixing and fastening the other's eyes, as if with a serpent's fascination. After a little while he slowly withdrew his hand, and coolly turning to the table, filled himself a stoup of the whiskey-punch from the silver vessel, into the tumbler which M'Kewn had used, and swallowed the contents

at a single gulp. He laid the tumbler down, then extended his open palm—

"That hundred guineas, M'Kewn!"

The spell was broken as he spoke. M'Kewn began to recover.

"Why, where have you been all this time, Bostwick?"

"Where did you reckon I was? In the bottom of the sea?—In h–ll's blazes, didn't you, and warn't you mighty glad to think so? But h–ll ain't hot enough for either on us yit, and when I had my last talk with the devil, he promised me, as how, when he did come for me, he'd take you at the same time. But he don't want us yit. He's got more work for both on us, on this airth. You was intirely wrong, M'Kewn, in trying to git rid of me. You kaint do without me, no more than I kin do without you. We're born for each other, and we've got to work together a long time to come!"

"But where have you been?"

"Better not aix! Not edzactly whar you wanted me to go, but jest on the edge, as I may say. I looked in at the door, didn't like the looks of it, the 'commydations they offered me, and turned short round. It was a question whether I should go in or your friends, Drummond, and Barton, and Forbes, the cappin, or me. I reckon'd the lodgin's would better suit them than me, so I let them take my place. They're gone with the despatches you made out for me."

"What do you mean? What despatches?"

"Oh!" you knows jest as well as me, what it was you meant them to do for me. But the devil, he come to my help, and made the sarvice cl'ar. They got the preference, and I gin up my place to 'em."

"What place? Where are they?"

"In h–ll, ef you wants to know; they'll never trouble you nor me no more. The devil put the ch'ice afore me—either them to burn or me to drown, and I didn't want three minutes to consider. I know'd they'd have to git used to fire in time to come, so I thought the sooner they began to l'arn the feel of it, the better for them."

"In the name of God, Bostwick, what do you mean? What have you done?"

"You're mighty slow to onderstand, these times. That's from heving such a world of money. What should I mean? Your friends took me out to sea—"

"Is it possible! Took you to sea!"

"Shet up, and don't lie to me. 'Tain't no use, M'Kewn. I know you like a book. We knows one another. 'Twarn't on sea that they were the good fellows they was on land. When we was in the 'castle,' and under the green trees, we was friends, and all on equal tairms. We played cards together, and sometimes they dreaned me, and sometimes I dreaned them. At sea the natur' changed. I was a man of the woods; they made me a man of the sea. I could climb trees; they made me climb ropes. It was no play thar; all work; they didn't wait to win my money, by a fair seven-up. They tuk it from me by main strength of hand.—Then I got the cat! The cat! You knows, I reckon, what they calls the cat?"

M'Kewn professed to be ignorant.

"You've got to l'arn it. I've promised Old Nick to do his work, on the very condition that, when he gits us both, he lets me treat you to the cat every night; so that you may lie down with a sartain softness in your feelin's, that ain't altogether sweetness. That cat which they gin to me has left its claw-marks on every inch of my back and body. But that warn't enough for 'em. When they got right off the place called Barbadoes, they holds a counciltation over me. What's to be done with me—what's to be done for *you*—and they 'grees 'mong their three selves, that the best things for both on us, is to send me over into the sea, to look after the great whale that swallowed Jony, the Philistian prophet—"

"Impossible! Did they really mean to—"

"Oh! shet up. Lying won't do 'twixt us, 'kaise, you see, we knows one another, M'Kewn, and we've got to work together, by solemn contractings, for the old horned Satan. Well, thar was the land, jest off thar; and the night was a-coming' on, and the sea was deep, and the shirks was a-playing about, and looking upward to the ship with all-fired hungry noses. And the counciltation of Forbes, and Drummond, and Barton, went on; and they said these poor shirks must be fed; and this poor Bostwick will give 'em mighty good feeding for a time; and when

he's gone, we'll get the hundred guineas from M'Kewn in place of him, and we must git shet of him to-night: and so the counciltation went on. But the devil stood my friend, and he hid me where I could hear all the counciltation; and when they had done, he said to me—'Now, Bost, whether you're to drown, or they to burn. It's for you to choose. Thar's the sea, and them's the shirks a-waiting for your supper; and the moon goes down about midnight, and then it's for you to try the cold feel of the water, and see how deep it is, and find out ef thar's any big whale to take you in, like Jony, the Philistian prophet, and save you from the shirks. Ef you waits to choose ontell the midnight, the water's your portion, and the bottom of the sea, whar thar's no bottom. And when the brigantine goes up to the town in the morning, they'll report one Bostwick, fell overboard last night and lost, from taking too much liquor.' It's a blessing that they gin me none, and I was sharp as a bag'net. Says the devil —'thar's one way to git out of danger.' And he showed me three kegs of gunpowder where they were stowed away; and he told me, what was mighty cur'ous to me to l'arn, that ef that gunpowder only happen'd to git the leetlest taste of the fire, it would fly like old blazes, and carry everybody up into heaven. That was mighty cur'ous, I thought; and he show'd me further, how a thing mout be managed, called 'a train,' and how a man setting in a boat outside of the ship, might jest touch the fire to the train, push off, and see the ship sail up in the air, much quicker than she ever sailed through the water. Well, you see, I thought that was better sport than to take the water myself, and s'arch after Jony's whale; and, with the help of Old Horny I tried it; and, sure enough, off she went, ship and all, and the three counsulters, and a small chaince of pussons more; and the people found me on the beach, and who knows how I got thar? They said I was blowed thar by the gunpowder;—and now M'Kewn that ere hundred guineas!"

CHAPTER LXI.

THAT HUNDRED GUINEAS!

It was easy for M'Kewn, even with this hurried and imperfect statement of the squatter, to gather the whole history of his enforced voyage, and the horrible catastrophe by which it was terminated. The cool and savage deliberation with which it was delivered, did not, however, produce any of those revolting and crushing sensations in the mind of the hearer, which might have arisen in that of any person of sensibility. M'Kewn, like his companion, was callous and cold-blooded; of so rank a selfishness, that sensibility had long since ceased to oppose any barriers to cupidity; and whose shows of humanity — shows only — were simply employed in deference to society, and with the view the better to promote the objects of his desire. Instead of shuddering and shrinking at what he heard, he was employed in recovering the subdued and scattered forces of his mind, in order to encounter the struggle which the reappearance of the squatter necessarily threatened. He knew the fellow too well to suppose that he should get off without a conflict, and felt that he was too well understood by him, to render available any of the ordinary arts of imposition. The terms upon which they stood, in regard to each other, were such that neither found it of any use to affect virtues which he did not possess. They had only to treat of crime and its reward, as of any matter of legitimate business. Any declarations of surprise, any avowals of good faith, or sympathy, would, he well knew, be utterly wasted on the ears of a person who knew him quite too well to be imposed upon any longer. Accordingly, with a manner the most unconcerned, M'Kewn, after a brief pause, remarked—

"And that was the way you got rid of them?"

"Yes; jest so. It was short and quick, and we had no quarrel. It was a private counciltation on both sides, them three on one side, and Old Horny and me on t'other. They were three to two, but we were a little too much of a match for 'em. It

turned out famous well for me. The people of Barbadoes raised a su'scription for me, and that filled my pockets, and I got home with a free passage, and didn't hev' any much work to do; though I did a leetle to please the cappin. 'Tain't quite four days sence I got to Charleston, and I pushed up here knowing you'd be mighty glad to hear of your friends, and how you wouldn't hev' to fill their pouches any more. I reckon it's a great gain to you, the loss of them men."

"Gain! It's a loss to me of thousands. I owned one third of that vessel and cargo. I owned sixty-nine of the negroes in her."

"Diccance! I'll hev' to 'low their valley out of the amount you owes me, then. It's only fair! Let me see: thar's what you owed me afore I went to sea; we'll reckon that at a thousand guineas; thar's the carrying me to sea agin my will, and only to pleasure you; that I vallies at five thousand guineas more, and cheap at that, I tell you; but we'll say five thousand —that's six thousand. Then, thar's the scare I had from the shirks and the drowning, all on your account; that ought to be a thousand guineas more; then, thar's the selling my soul to the Old Horny, to get out of the hands of them fellows. A free white man's soul ought to be worth something, and we'll call it a thousand guineas more; that makes eight thousand; then, thar's the onhappiness I had to skyrocket them three good fellows to heaven; that was a great onhappiness, and I valley my sufferin's mighty high; but we'll say two thousand guineas more; and that, in round numbers, will be ten thousand guineas; and, out of that, I'm to 'low for them sixty-nine niggers of your'n that went up in the skyrocketing. I reckon they mout be vallied at fifty guineas apiece:—how much is that in all? Count up, M'Kewn, I'm guine to 'low for all."

"Pshaw! What are you talking about?"

"What em I talking about? I'll tell you, and you may jest pick your ears that you may hear it plain. Thar's an account of life and death to settle atween us, M'Kewn, that may be settled up with money, ef you've the sense to onderstand what's best for you. You'll pay it out of your pocket, ef you're sensible; ef you're a fool, it comes out of your heart. To pay for it in money, won't drean your pocket; to pay for it in blood, will

go nigh to drean your body of all it's got. I knows what I says. I knows that I kin hang you jest when I pleases, and I don't owe you any love that I should keep my hands off. But I kin sell my hate and my love together. Everything I've got is to sell, ef so be I'm well paid for it; and you must buy from me at my prices, or I'll bankcorrupt you, as they calls it. You'll hev' to feed me and find me, me and my fam'ly, my wife and my children, jest so long as you lives and we lives; and you'll hev' to feed us well; and to begin, I'm a-wanting jest one hundred guineas to-night, and next week, I'll be a-wanting, prehaps, a hundred more. I'm guine to buy property; I'm guine into a speckilation for the good of my fam'ly. You hear it all. I put it plain before you. It's jest for you to say whether it's peace or war; fair tarms or foul; money or blood!"

This was all plain enough, delivered in a manner the most downright and direct, the squatter confronting the Scotchman at the distance of a single pace, and his hand flourishing at moments in the very face of the latter. When he had finished speaking, he again turned to the whiskey punch, unasked, and repeated his draught.

M'Kewn listened with chilled sensations. He understood but too well the existing terms between himself and his enemy. He saw that nothing had been exaggerated in the speech of the squatter. The latter truly had him at his mercy; and he felt that he was destined to continue exactions, so long as Bostwick or himself should live. There was no evasion of the incumbrance, and the time was gone by, utterly, when the employee could be put off or deceived. He had no remaining subterfuges against a foe so wily, and so well-informed in respect to his character. Meanwhile, the squatter seemed to amuse himself surveying the apartment, which was large, lofty, highly finished, richly hung with drapery, and with fine pictures hanging against the walls. A sabre, between a pair of silver-mounted pistols, was among these decorations. The squatter's eye took in all.

"You're a-living like a fighting cock, M'Kewn," said he, with a *dégagée* air that was quite distressing to the Scotchman, and served to increase his irritation. "Now, I'm a-wanting to live easy and like a fighting cock, too, but don't you think I'm a-wanting to hev' sich fine things in my cabin. They doesn't suit

sich as me, and agin, I doesn't care to hev' em. What I wants is a sartainty for myself, and for Dory. That's all; and the sartainty must be a respectable one. A nice little house and farm, and, prehaps, two or three niggers to work in the field, and an old woman to cook, and a gal to be a sort of waiting-maid to little Dory."

To this, M'Kewn only answered with an "Ah!—Well!—Yes!" but his eyes followed the movements of the squatter with an intensity of interest which gave them a wild expression.—Meanwhile, though stalking about, with an air of inebriate hardihood and indifference, that seemed to be heedful of nothing, the squatter might be seen to keep a furtive watch on the Scotchman, which never suffered the slightest movement to escape him; but this was not perceptible to M'Kewn. Highly excited by his own reflections upon the desperate bondage in which he felt himself placed, the usual vigilance of this cool and subtle strategist was greatly lessened. His passions served to bind him somewhat at the very moment when every faculty should have been most acutely sharpened and observant. His thoughts, under the influence of these passions, were of a sort to madden him. Was there no escape from the arrogance of this enemy? Was he to be plagued perpetually without any hope of relief? Was he for ever to be made to fear for his secret, particularly now, when, this danger quieted, his position in life was so grateful, and might become altogether triumphant.

It was past midnight. The house was quiet. The servants were all retired and asleep. Nobody had seen the squatter enter. Nobody knew of his visit. The rain was now falling heavily; the winds beat sullenly against the shutter. Night and storm were auxiliaries to a deed of blood. Why should he not quiet the foe for ever, by a single blow? Why not, by one sudden, desperate deed, relieve himself for ever from this haunting, harrowing arrogance; this perpetual danger, which promised never to suffer him to repose in security? His eye rested upon the pistols which hung upon the wall. They were both loaded, he knew—charged with a brace of bullets. They were such as he could well rely on. The suggestion coursed rapidly through his mind. It grew in force; it ripened to conclusion; it became a resolution In a moment, he sprang to his feet, whirled aside

the great chair upon which he had been sitting, and darted toward the pistols.

But, resolute as was his determination, secret and sudden of purpose, and prompt of execution, he was too late. The squatter knew his man, had suffered none of his movements to escape him, and when M'Kewn stretched out his hand to grasp the weapons upon the wall, he encountered the squatter. Bostwick stood between, and, instead of arming himself, M'Kewn found a pistol at his own breast.

"Keep quiet, now, M'Kewn, and git back to your easy chair. It is not your time yit, nor is it mine. I don't want to hurt you, but I knows you, and will jest keep a p'inter upon your motions, tell I has my axings."

"Devil! Would you murder me? Would you drive me to madness?"

"Well, twarn't good sense in me to be doing either one, so long as I gits what I wants by easy means. But, rether than not git it, I'd kill you soon enough, and drive you to the devil, and to madness, and eny whar' you choose, and not sp'ile my appetite in doing it. Set you down, I tell you, and don't be making yourself a redickilous figger!"

"What is it you want?" was the demand of M'Kewn, half-moved to rush upon the fellow in defiance of the pistol.

"Well, that's a foolish question arter all I've been a-telling you. I wants a leetle of my rights. To begin—a hundred guineas, which I must hev' this very night."

"That's impossible. I don't keep money in the country!"

"That's nothing to me. You must find it. I don't quit you, M'Kewn, till I gits the gould guineas, one hundred on 'em, in this very hand. Set you down quiet, and think over the different draws, or holes, whar' you hides away your yallow-birds. As for gitting at the pistols, while I has a pair on 'em myself, crammed to the muzzle with bullets, that's onpossible, and you knows it. Set down quiet, and think over what you hev' to do. I'll give you time for the thinking."

M'Kewn drew back submissively, and sank into the seat again. As he did so, the squatter took down the pistols from the wall and stuck them into his belt.

"It's only a removing the temptation from your eyes."

This done, he began to pace the room languidly as before, at times humming the words and air of a song of vulgar independence, then quite popular among the whigs, but the words of which have only in part descended to our times.

"I've no money, I've no lands,
Yet I carry fearless hands,
And I fear no lord's commands.
Let him thunder as he may,
I've the strength to do my part,
Strong of arm, and stout of heart,
And I do not care ——"

Here M'Kewn's voice broke in upon that of the singer.

"And if I give you this hundred guineas, Bostwick, are you prepared to deliver up those papers in the box of Mrs. Eveleigh?"

"Not edzactly! You don't git them delivered, M'Kewn, tell you plank down one hundred more guineas, on the nail, and I'll ixpect you to do that very thing by the middle of next week."

The Scotchman again started up in a fury.

"Easy, M'Kewn; take it easy, and it'll be so much the better for your narves. You're flurried and thar's no use for it. Don't you see, now, that you hev' to come to it. Thar's no gitting off."

M'Kewn groaned aloud; then turning to the silver flagon which had held the punch, he proceeded, with trembling hands, to pour its contents into a tumbler.

"That's right! It'll steady your narves. I'm only afear'd I've left you too small a sup!"

"Yes!" quoth M'Kewn, quickly. "I'll step down stairs and get a fresh supply. You'll be wanting more also."

"Quiet, M'Kewn. You doesn't leave this room ontell I gits my guineas."

And, with the words, the squatter coolly locked the door, and put the key into his pocket.

"Damnation, man! Do you mean to make me a prisoner in my own house?"

"Oh! psho! shet up! What made it your house any more than mine? Only bekaise you had better skill in roguery. Ef I goes out here onsatisfied, M'Kewn, your house goes to the devil and you 'long with it! Don't you onderstand yit, that I kin tear you out of it, by the hands of Johnny Ketch, the born rope-

stretcher. Be sensible, and git the guineas; and then you may git the drink."

M'Kewn resumed his seat, and sternly regarded his persecutor, no longer concealing, or seeking to conceal, the venomous hatred of his heart, betraying itself, without disguise, in every feature of his face.

"Well," said Bostwick, "you're looking now more honest-like than I've seed you for many a day. You'll be letting me hev' those guineas, I see. That's the right sense. You hev' no chaince, M'Kewn. I'm a-top of you this time!"

The words were those of truth and soberness, however strange, coming from such lips. M'Kewn felt them to be so. He had been put in check at every point of the game, and to avoid checkmate it was necessary to sacrifice a few pawns. However reluctant to receive this conviction, it came to him at last.

"You shall have the guineas; but I must have the box of papers."

"All in good time! It'll take a hundred guineas more, I tell you, M'Kewn, afore you gets them papers."

"And when am I to have them?"

"Next week, when I wants the other hundred guineas."

"And then?"

"Well! What then?"

"Am I then to be rid of you for ever?"

"For ever's a long time, M'Kewn, and I kain't quite answer; but I rether think you'll never be rid of me; for, as I tell'd you, Old Horny has promised that we shall keep together all the time, work together on this airth, and go to him together; and when thar"—pointing downward—"I'm to give you a little taste of that same cat that has left its claw marks all over my mortal body."

"Pshaw!"

"You may 'pshaw' as much as you please, but I tell you—whether I seed or haird, or only dreamed it, I kaint say—but as I'm a living sinner, *I think*, I seed the devil in his own nateral shape; something more than a human, something less than a beast—a mighty fearsome sort of cross between a big man and a wild animal, *nara* one nor t'other edzactly, and looking a heap like both, and talking like a man, so that I could *on*derstand:

and he tell'd me the same words I tell you, which was—'Bostwick, when I comes for you, I'll call for M'Kewn at the same time. You're bound to come together.' Thar! believe it as you choose, only git me the guineas!"

"And if I now give you a hundred guineas—"

"Next week another hundred."

"You will then give me up the papers, and rid me for ever of your presence?"

"That last thing, M'Kewn, you see, ef the devil speaks truth at all, is quite *on*possible; and I ain't the man to fly in the face of the devil, and say I won't see any of his friends. I reckon I'll hev' to see you whenever I wants money; but after them two hundred guineas, I'll give you a long rest—may be for six months or more."

M'Kewn reflected, and determined to leave the promised security, for the present, to the chapter of chances. To gain time is the great object with every politician whom stubborn necessity threatens to gravel. M'Kewn had a faith in a sort of devil providence. He meditated to himself—

"If I can get the papers out of him, and be sure of six months forbearance, much may be done—much may happen in that time. I shall not always be locked up and weaponless, in a close room. The pistols need not always be upon the wall. He may be found napping in turn. In that is my hope." Aloud—

"You shall have your hundred guineas Bostwick, now; and next week, when you bring me the papers, you shall have another hundred."

"That's being sensible, I say."

"But I must then be rid of you. Remember that!"

"Well! That's jest as it happens, M'Kewn. I'm sure it's not you I wants to see any time, and ef you kin find out the way to fill my hand with the gould chickens when I wants 'em, I'd never darken your door in a hundred years of Sundays. But quieck, M'Kewn; I've got a stretch of bad riding to do yit before daypeep."

"The money is in that chest," said the Scotchman, as if to himself. He crossed the room toward the chest with stood in the opposite corner, stooped, and prepared to open it. The squatter's vigilance did not desert him. His reflections were of this sort—unuttered, of course.

"He's got other we'pons in that chist, prehaps; other pistols, loaded with double bullets. He don't catch this weasel asleep this time!"

M'Kewn opened the chest, which contained a variety of things. There was money—gold and silver in an open box;—there were trinkets of value, several large pieces of plate—and, sure enough, conspicuous over all, a splendid pair of pistols, easy at hand, ready for use. The hand of M'Kewn hung indecisively over the open chest. There was the gold on one side, there the pistols on the other. The fingers clutched one of the pistols. He raised his head cautiously, and cast his eyes upward. The squatter stood immediately over him, with the muzzle of his own formidable pistol staring him in the face. Bostwick, stealthy as a wild cat, had crept behind him, weapon in hand, and was peering down into the chest, ready for any event. He laughed aloud, as he saw the action of the Scotchman.

"T'wont do, M'Kewn! This weasel never sleeps when he's in the fowl-house."

M'Kewn quietly laid down the weapon he had grasped, and gathered up the gold. The signs in his horoscope were not then friendly. He must wait events—have patience, and look to another shuffle of the cards. The money was counted out, paid and received.

"Look for me next week, M'Kewn, and be ready with the other hundred."

"And see that you bring the papers; for I tell you, Bostwick, if I die for it, you get not another shilling till I have the papers."

"You shill hev 'em, and the account will then be squared between us, of all that happened before you shipped me for the shirks. But after that, we must have new reckonings."

"D—n his reckonings!" exclaimed M'Kewn, after he was gone. "Once deprived of those papers, and I do not fear him. *His* evidence will not be worth a straw in any court."

The squatter again popped his head suddenly into the chamber:

"I'll leave your pistols for you, M'Kewn, outside the door, down stairs. But shan't we hev a sup of that same liquor together afore I leave you."

"Begone—no!" The squatter grinned only—

"Well, good night, M'Kewn; what's left of it!"

CHAPTER LXII.

THE SQUATTER IN HIS CABIN.

The squatter did not show himself to any other eyes that night. He did not proceed to the cabin where his wife and children dwelt. He housed himself in the swamp with his secret treasure. He found this safe. His fastnesses had not been found out; his box of guineas and papers had been undisturbed in the same condition as when he left it. Crouched in the hollow of the cypress, he slept over it, and did not emerge the next day till the sun was high in the heavens. Then he issued forth, and stood still, in the shelter of the woods, but upon the dry land. He made his way to the spring which, about a quarter of a mile from his dwelling, supplied his family with water. This was one of those sweet, secret, unobtrusive basins, issuing modestly from the earth just on the edges of the swamp, such as form a peculiar feature in our forest country; a little hollow, with clear white sand at the bottom, and a grassy fringe all about it, with the waters gushing out silently from a couple of small eyes in the bankside. Shaded by great trees of the forest, it was always cool, and with a tolerably rapid course to the swamp, it was always clear and pure. The squatter knew where to look for the *calabash*, the cup of gourd, hanging from a bough of the tree just over it. He dipped and drank—drank deeply of the delicious waters—then stooping, bathed his head and neck in the running stream. This done, he threw himself down among the trees beside it, with an air of exhaustion and langnor quite unwonted in his usual habit.

In truth, his appearance was that of a diseased and almost deranged man. His face burned with fever, his eyes were bloodshot and prominent, almost seeming to start from his head; his mouth lay open, and he panted with the least exertion. As he walked, his motion was unsteady, and his limbs tottered beneath him. He rose, after a little while, again drank, and again dipped his head into the waters. Scarcely had he left them,

once more retiring among the trees, when his keen ear detected the sound of approaching voices. His instincts at once prompted him to hide himself; which he did without effort, among the shrubs near at hand. Very soon he beheld the persons of the intruders. These were no other than young Arthur Eveleigh attending his own pretty daughter.

Dory, whom he had not seen before now, since his return, was wonderfully improved. She had grown evidently taller in six months. She was now at that interesting period of life when the girl may be said to glide into the woman. She was precocious, and her air and manner were in advance of her years. She had caught up quickly, in her occasional visits to Mrs. Eveleigh, the graces of a higher sphere of life than that to which she belonged, and it was with a natural pride that the eye of the squatter beheld the mixed ease, simplicity, and animation of her movements. Her features were as beautiful as ever; her form showed to more advantage in the better costume which the widow had provided her; the lively flashing of her eye, and the clear, silvery, flute-like accents of her voice, declared a pure happiness of the heart, such as she had seldom before betrayed in the sight of her father.

At the first sight of his child, the heart of the squatter bounded within him, with a pleasurable and exulting sensation. She was *his!* She was the only one, perhaps, of all his household, who had somehow found the way to his rugged and spasmodic affections. But, after a few moments, the natural selfishness of a bad heart suggested that the girl had improved in grace, beauty, health, and showed improved fortunes, and joy, and hope, and animation, though he the father had been a wanderer—though he had been tossed about wearily in distant lands, in dread, and strife, and danger—and, for all she knew, might be dead, drowned, or sacrificed with brutal ferocity to the vengeance of his enemies.

For a while the bitter feeling inspired by this reflection predominated over all others. But this disappeared when he looked upon Arthur Eveleigh, and witnessed the lively interest which that young man seemed to take in his beautiful child. Dory carried a bucket, with which she designed to bring water from the spring. It was not a large or weighty vessel, but Arthur

would have snatched it from her, and carried it himself, but she refused and jerked it away, and, laughing sportively at his attempts, darted from him, flying like a fawn, and, reaching the spring before him. He, of course, pursued, and a playful struggle took place at the spring as to who should fill the bucket.

"Not you, Arthur!" said the child, keeping always in mind the superior social position of her companion.

"But why not, Dory? I'm the ablest, the strongest, and it's not right that a girl like you should do such things. I will fill it."

"Well, you may help me. I'll fill it half, and you shall fill the other."

"Very well; but I want some to drink, Dory. You fill the calabash for me, and I'll fill it then for you. You want to drink, I suppose?"

"Yes! I'll do that! There!" and she handed him the simple gourd filled with the sweet and sparkling waters.

He insisted that she should drink, but she refused resolutely, and he did not press it, but satisfied his thirst, threw away the water remaining in the cup, stooped, rinsed it in the running stream, then dipped up a fresh supply of water. His carriage was gently solicitous, fond and playful, but studiously considerate and respectful. Between them the bucket was filled finally, but not in the shortest possible time. They prattled, the girl and boy, over every gourd of water which they lifted up; and when they were done, Arthur seized upon the bucket and proceeded to bear it off.

"Oh! you mustn't, Arthur; mother will be vexed if she sees you doing such work."

"Work, indeed! why it's nothing to me, Dory, to carry it."

"Yes, but I can't let you; mother will think it's unworthy of you." And she seized upon the handle, but Arthur refused to yield it.

In pulling opposite ways, the water began to spill; then, as by mutual consent, the two set the vessel down, and suddenly, before Dory could suspect his purpose, Arthur had seized her about the waist, and bestowed a sudden kiss upon her burning lips.

"Oh! Arthur, you promised me you wouldn't do so again."

"Well, why did you fight with me for the bucket, Dory," was the pert reply of the boy.

"I didn't fight with you. You know I ought to carry it. Mother—"

"Oh! don't tell me about your mother. You are always talking as if she was the greatest scold in the world. Now I know she never scolds you at all. So, no more of that, Dory. You take one side of the handle, and I'll take the other, and we'll carry the bucket so together."

The compromise was acceptable, and the two disappeared with their burden, prattling away all the secrets of their young hearts, never once dreaming who had been the listener. When they were gone, the squatter fell into a fit of musing, in spite of his feverish and suffering condition, for he now, himself, felt that he was really ill.

"Ef he would marry her now, she'd desarve it. She's a most beautiful and blessed looking child as I ever did see. She's beautiful and sweet enough to be the wife of any man. But 'tain't possible that sich a thing could happen. His mother would be agin it. When he grow'd a little older and more knowing, he'd be agin it. People would talk. He'd hear 'em speak of the Squatter Bostwick. He'd hear 'em tell of how she was the child of a poor man, that lived in a cabin; and who was, altogether, a most bad man, and a rascal. And how could he stand that? No! he couldn't stand it. He couldn't marry her: and so there must be no love doings betwixt 'em. I must take care of that! Dory is too blessed a child to hev a man fooling about her when he can't never marry her: and I must take care of her; and I must take care of him; and ef I finds him at eny mischief, I'll put a knife into him jest as soon as I would stick a pig, and a great deal sooner too."

Again the squatter moved down to the spring, and drank. He was really suffering.. He lounged or lay about in the woods for some hours. Why he still kept away from his cabin and his family, it would be difficult to conjecture. But he only drew nigh to it at-night; and then, under a sense of suffering which rendered him inaccessible to the sense of fear. He found his way in at last, and immediately took to his bed. His illness increased. His wife gave him some simple medicines, but they afforded him

no relief. For several days he lay upon a couch of pain, without succor, the excitement of his mind increasing with the increase of fever. At length he called Dory to his bedside.

"Dory, you must go to M'Kewn for me. You know M'Kewn. You know where he lives?"

"Yes, father! I saw him when I was staying with Mrs. Eveleigh."

"What! you staying with Mrs. Eb'leigh? But never mind that now. You must go to M'Kewn, and tell him to come to me to-night; I wants him. I must see him here; and don't you take any 'scuses, you hear! He must come. Tell him I'll fix the thing for him. He shall hev the papers, but tell him be sure to bring the gould. And look you, Dory, don't you let anybody see you. Take the short cut through the woods; and don't you be guine now to the widow's and don't you let anybody know nothing of who sent you, and whar you're a guine. Now, you *on*derstand?"

"Yes, father."

"Well, let me hear what you've got to do and say."

She repeated his instructions.

"Very well; and now be off as soon as you kin. I'm in a hurry, you see."

The girl obeyed. Of what nature was the hurry of which the squatter spoke, he, perhaps, had no certain consciousness; but he soon made it apparent to his wife that his mind was unsettled. He called her up, as soon as Dory was gone, and said:—

"When M'Kewn comes here to-night, you must cl'ar out with the children. You kin hev a fire made up in the woods, and keep warm while we're a talking together. We've got a long talk to do together. We've got a heap of business. I'm a guine to buy a farm for Dory, and you and the children can live with her when she's married. I'm guine to buy her some niggers, and fix her up handsome in the world. She shan't be a beggar child *en*y longer. You hear to that, and ef you takes the right care of her it'll be all the better for you. Do you hear to that? Give me some water to drink. I'm consuming thairsty."

She gave him the water. He drank, and rose from the bed; but staggered from weakness. The wife urged him to lie down again, but he replied sharply—

"Git out, and don't meddle whar you don't *on*derstand. Go along now, and put yourself on the road leading to the pinelands, and see ef thar's nobody about, and come and tell me quick."

She did so, and during her absence he proceeded to dress himself, which he did with evident effort. He was feeble, had taken little or no nourishment, and was sustained only by the excitement of fever, and a will that would not suffer him to admit, even to himself, the extent of his sufferings. By the time that he had finished dressing himself, his wife returned. The road was clear; there was nobody to be seen. He prepared to go forth.

You're not going out?" she asked.

"What's it to you ef I am? Mind your own business."

He disappeared, and was absent a full hour. When he returned, he brought with him, wrapped up in the folds of his cloak, the box of Mrs. Eveleigh, containing the papers and the stolen treasure, with the hundred guineas additional he had received from M'Kewn. The wife saw that he carried something with him, but she was not permitted to know what. He concealed it beneath the bed-clothes where he lay, sinking upon the couch in utter exhaustion as he did so. The day passed. In due season Dory returned, bringing a message from M'Kewn, who promised to come as required.

"Good!" said the squatter, languidly smiling upon the child. "You're a beauty of the forest, Dory, and I love you, and you shill hev a farm of your own, Dory, and niggers to work for you, and a nice little waiting-maid servant of your own—all of your own."

"Thank ye, father; and, father, I want you to let me read to you now, out of this book."

"The Bible! no, none of that now; for I've got dealings with the devil to-night, or one that's a born brother of the devil, and I don't want any good lessons when I've got to deal with such sorts of persons. Shet it up, Dory, and jest you sit by me now, and sing for me some soft sweet little bit of a song. But, first, give me some water."

"Father, oughtn't you to take physic?"

"Well, ef I know'd what physic to take, Dory; but I don't."

"There's a Doctor ———"

"Jest stop, now, and don't you tell me of doctors, now I

hev'nt got money to give to doctors. I'll want all .o buy your farm and niggers."

"Oh! don't mind that, father, but send for Doctor ———."

"Shet up! You don't know what you're a saying. I must mind that. I've got nothing else but that to mind. I'm aguine to make you a lady, Dory, so that you shill be able to marry a fine great gentleman some day."

"But. father —"

"Shet up, and jest sing, that's all."

The child obeyed, and she sang for him a well-known rustic ditty. He shut his eyes, and seemed to slumber; and sometimes watching him, sometimes singing to him, and answering his calls for water, the day sped away, and the still watches of the night come on. As the wife lighted her dipped candles in the chamber. the squatter started up.

"It's night, and that devil M'Kewn's not come."

"It's just dark, father, I reckon he'll be here."

As she spoke, the hoofs of a horse were heard.

"That's him, I knows," said the squatter. "And now," he continued, addressing his wife, "do you cl'ar out, as I told you, and take Dory and the children with you, and make up a fire in the woods, and don't be poking about here to listen, for when a man's got to talk with the devil and his angels, he don't want eny body to hear the bargain he makes."

In a few minutes M'Kewn tapped at the door, was admitted, and the wife, with her children, disappeared. The door was carefully fastened, and the two criminals, colleagues no longer, were alone together.

CHAPTER LXII.

THE SKRIMMAGE AT GLEN-EBERLEY, AND HOW IT ENDED.

From the cabin of the squatter to the mansion of the planter is, with us now, as it frequently is in fact, only a stone's throw. Let us pass from one to the other. The bolt has descended. Captain Porgy is in tribulation. The sheriff, with the *posse comitatus*, is at Glen-Eberley. There is great confusion in the garrison. It is a garrison, however, well defended. The doors are all barred and bolted. From the upper windows, Sergeant Millhouse and Tom, the cook, are keeping watch, armed to the teeth. The captain is moving from chamber to chamber, breathing defiance. There is warrant out for his arrest. He swears that his person shall never be dishonored by the touch of the sheriff. Meanwhile, that officer, with his myrmidons, has environed the dwelling. They have failed to capture the negroes, who are all off. Tom, and that antique mother of many "generations," old Sappho, only excepted. Apprised of the approach of the enemy, Lance Frampton was deputed by Millhouse to take charge of the negroes, and house them in the swamp. This duty done, he was to act as a scouting party, making proper efforts to relieve the garrison, by throwing in provisions, whenever opportunity should offer.

The sheriff, meanwhile, sustained by Crooke, the much-suffering deputy, who tenaciously sought his own revenge, with some half dozen auxiliary bull-dogs of the courts, was yet bewildered with the difficulties of his situation; provoked by the perverse and utterly useless obstinacy of Porgy, yet half-laughing at the military resolve to convert his house into a castle at a period when the mailed coat of the soldier was in duty bound to give place to the gown of the civilian. The sheriff's natural good humor and love of good fellowship, were in conflict with his official dignities and duties. And, now, under the trees in the

avenue, he sat in consultation with his forces. They did not dare to venture within a hundred yards. They had already tried the defences and were warned off; sullen looking rifle-muzzles protruding from port-holes cut in the shuttered windows, and pistols swaying out significantly through broken panes of glass in the upper story.

While thus they sat, in front of the strong and well-manned garrison which they had summoned in vain to surrender, they were threatened by unexpected dangers in the rear. Lance Frampton, having securely housed the fugitive negroes, was making the circuit of the plantation, when he beheld two strange-looking persons approaching. One was an exceeding tall man, something over fifty, lean, lank, long; of dry, withered aspect; simple as skinny of visage, but with something in his face that pronounced him a character. His companion was altogether a different person, of middle size, well built without being stout, of a full, frank, fair countenance, fine complexion, light blue eye, which twinkled merrily when he spoke, and a joyous laugh, like the ringing of a bird note, that you could hear a mile off. Both of them carried rifles, and, with their arms, equipments and dress, were altogether just such persons in appearance as were Captain Porgy and his comrades, as we beheld them when, homeward bound, they first left the camp of Marion.

It was Frampton's present duty to overhaul these strangers. They might be additional forces of the sheriff whom he was bound to cut off. He resumed all the strategic practice that he had acquired in the war; tied his horse in the woods and stole under cover toward the strangers, who were both on foot. One of them, by the way, the tall man, carried an enormous sack upon his shoulders, which stuck out in every direction; the other bore a little wallet, of leather, which hung out upon the end of his rifle. When they approached sufficiently nigh, Frampton leaped out with a joyful cry to meet them. He knew them at a glance.

"What, George?" he cried, to the younger of the two,—"Is it you?" and, "Doctor, I am really glad to see you."

The parties have been, more than once, subjects of remark in our narrative. They were old followers of Porgy;—the one Doctor Oakenburg, a culler of simples and catcher of snakes;

both of which his sack was now full; tumbled in, in old confusion, with shirts and breeches, and other body-gear;—the other was no less a person than George Dennison, the poet of the partisans, of whom Porgy had been always very fond, and whom he was required to defend very frequently against the utilitarian philosophies of Millhouse. The meeting on both sides was very joyous; the welcome of Frampton was delivered in earnest. These were auxiliaries, allies, whom he took for granted, would readily side with him against the sheriff. Upon Dennison he could put reliance. Oakenburg was one who had no relish for danger; and now, when told of the predicament in which Porgy stood, and asked if he would not co-operate for his relief, he avowed his readiness to do so only on condition that he was required to "act in a situation which should be *one of perfect security*." The phrase was one to which all his associates had been accustomed for years; and yet, though stipulating thus always, he had gone through several campaigns without absolutely skulking from any fight. His professional *rôle* was something of a protection, it is true; but it was notorious that a patient was never in more danger than when Oakenburg promised to save him. Dennison was delighted with the notions of circumventing the sheriff, and readily fell into all the plans which Lance presented. His scheme was suddenly to fall upon the party of the sheriff in the rear, and by giving a proper signal to the garrison, effect a simultaneous movement, by which the two parties, pushing forward at the same moment, might utterly surprise and capture the myrmidons of the law together, at one single swoop. It was calculated that a mere demonstration from front and rear, at the same moment, would enable them to succeed in their object without shedding a drop of blood. Our partisans, it will be seen from this, had but very little notion of the valor of those who had served only in the chambers of the law.

Frampton's plans were soon completed. His companions were both armed, as we have said. They submitted to his directions. He brought them down, under cover all the way, until they lay *perdu*, each with the bead of his rifle prepared to tell upon an enemy's button. To establish a communication with the garrison was the next object. To effect this—having given Dennison full instructions as to what he and Oakenburg should do, and at

what moment—Frampton stole away, and they lost sight of him for half an hour. In this time, he made his way, unseen by those without, to the dwelling, and by signals previously agreed upon with Millhouse, found admittance. His scheme was duly reported, rapidly considered, and eagerly resolved upon. Porgy was now in such a state of excitement, that he never stopped to reason upon any portion of the affair but the probability of its success. An enterprise of this nature carried him back to the familiar stimulants of several exciting years. He thought of the sortie, its beauties, its *modus operandi;* the sally, the shout, the triumph;—never once of THE LAW; the sacred character of the sheriff—the awful powers of the courts; the state and its outraged dignities!

Frampton had now disappeared, and the garrison beat to arms. Porgy appeared in the hall in full armor; Millhouse was there, with his sabre waving in air; Tom carried a sabre also; a rifle was slung upon his shoulder, as upon his master's; and there were pistols in everybody's belt. We must not forget to mention one fact, however, that, wild as was our captain of partisans, he took special care that none of the weapons should be charged with ball. Good heavy charges of powder, well-wadded, were thrust into the guns and pistols; but nothing more heavy. Our captain's aim was to surprise, to scare, and to capture or disperse his enemy. He made Lance Frampton and Millhouse understand this matter clearly; and was particularly heedful that they should see, that, however willing to violate the laws in some respects, he was yet scrupulous that no blood should be shed.

We are not prepared to say that he felt no anxieties on this head, since any encounter of the sort must necessarily, even with the best purposes of forbearance, on the side of one of the parties, be of doubtful accidents; but, in truth, his own excited temper did not suffer him very profoundly to meditate the possibilities of the experiment. The watch above stairs, meanwhile, duly reported progress. Signals were momently expected, and our garrison stole down the inner stairs to the basement, prepared to rush from under the porch upon the sheriff's party, as soon as Frampton could be heard from. He, meanwhile, made his way to his new allies, Dennison and Oakenburg. The latter

to encourage the latter to audacity, the lieutenant described the affair as a furious jest only. The withdrawal of the bullets from all their weapons seemed to confirm this.

"But," says the lieutenant—"you must look as if in earnest, and behave just as if it was all real and serious fighting. That's the only way to scare off these fellows. They ain't used to fighting, and a few random shots, and a good big shouting, will be pretty sure to do their business, particularly when they see us, on one side, and the captain and his men on t'other, rushing on like mad, and flourishing pistols and broadswords. That's all we shall have to do."

Dennison was eager for the fun, and, now that it seemed so innocent, Oakenburg was not unready. Quietly, the three stole toward the sheriff's party, in silence the most profound, as long as they could possibly approach without discovery. Frampton, on this progress, had separated from the two, and taken another direction, which enabled him to act between the several parties. He was to give the signal, discharging a pistol, and rushing into sight, though at a greater distance from the enemy than either of the other parties. This, after a little interval, he did.

His pistol-shot, his fierce halloo, and his rush, from out the covert, was followed in a few seconds by a terrible uproar from the court of the dwelling; and, directly after, from Dennison and his companion: Oakenburg had famous lungs, if his courage was wanting in firmness. He could roar like an alligator, and his bellowings shook the wood. The sheriff and his party were at once on their feet. They were environed with dangers. They knew not which way to turn. Their consternation was evident at a glance. The sheriff was firm, but surprised; his immediate ally, Crooks, whose own revenges were ever uppermost in his mind, was ready for battle, so far as appetite was concerned; but he was divided between three fires. The one great bully, whom they had brought with them, and who had never in his life shrunk from fist or bludgeon, now showed a very different spirit, when pistols and rifles were introduced into the discussion. He had a very wholesome reluctance to an atmosphere about to be impregnated with gunpowder. At the very first shout and shot (which came together) he started off at a run, and was knocked down by the furious Crooks, as he

was making off. He scarcely stirred again until the affair was over—until the firing had fairly ceased.

Meanwhile, the several parties performed their separate duties with admirable concert. On a sudden, the corpulent might of Captain Porgy, like a young buffalo, might be seen emerging from the cover of his piazza. He came forward, swelling and *splurging*—to employ the phrase by which Millhouse frequently described his assault afterward—his eyes glaring like meteors, his voice yelling a terrific slogan; his broad-sword waving like the broad tail of a fiery comet, at the advent of an earthquake. Porgy could not exactly rush or run, but he could roll forward with wonderful effect, and his lungs were good. His strength was great when he once set hands upon his victim. He looked in terrible earnest as he came. While his right grasped the broad-sword, his left carried a pistol. As he advanced, he fired with deliberate aim at the enemy, then dropping the one pistol drew another, still advanced, still took deadly aim, fired and hurried onward with a shout.

Millhouse did likewise. So Frampton from his quarter; so Dennison and Oakenburg from theirs; so Tom, the cook, following close in the wake of his master; and finally, so Sappho, the ancient, whose screams from toothless jaws were absolutely most awful of all to hear. Can you wonder at the result. Can you doubt that the sheriff's party was discomfited, even before a blow was struck. His men fled incontinently from the field, all but Crooks, who stood bravely beside his chief, with bludgeon in hand, and looked the danger in the face with tolerable composure.

The sheriff drew his small-sword with the air of a nobleman in a conflict with a crowd of *canaille*, who sees that he must perish, and takes the proper attitude at once to die with grace and dignity, and do something *wicked* while falling. But he was allowed no chance. Half a dozen pistols flashed pretty near his face and that of Crooks, utterly blinding them. They both concluded themselves slain, though doubtful at the moment where to locate their hurts; and while the sheriff, with the despair of a dying man, darted forward and thrust out his sword in the direction of Porgy's abdominal demonstration, Tom, the cook, rushed upon him from behind, dexterously dived between his

parted legs, lifted him fairly from the ground, and, while his sword furiously but fruitlessly slashed away in air, hurried him off to the house a prisoner.

Crooks was captured—nay, ridden down—by Oakenburg, who, with immensely long legs, seeing a terrier-like little man before him, with his back turned, deliberately cast his leg over his shoulder, curled the limb completely about his neck, and thus brought him down to earth; when Millhouse took him into keeping, by leisurely letting himself down upon the captive, whose bristles of chin and cheek he curiously examined; feeling them with his one hand, while commenting upon the wonderful rapidity with which red or copper-colored beards shoot out. Crooks struggled fiercely, but it required the slightest effort in the world on the part of the sergeant, to suffer his fingers to slip from the chin to the throat of his captive. A gripe of the weasand, by such steely prongs as Millhouse wore by way of fingers, soon subdued all the bristles of the deputy, whether of wrath or whisker.

While this was going on, Porgy was engaged in rescuing the sheriff from Tom's clutches; a not easy matter. Our excellent cook, assuming that he should certainly be permitted to strip, if not to slay his prisoner,—as had been his custom in battle,—was not willing to deliver the captive until his master promised to account to him for his garments; when he suffered the discomfited sheriff to feel the solid earth once more. Porgy came up and clapped the knight of the shire upon his shoulder,—

"Shall there be peace between us, colonel?"

"Peace!—Captain Porgy, you have dishonored me! You have still your sword in hand, and I have mine. I appeal to your sense of honor, that we cross blades."

"Pooh! pooh! my dear fellow, there's no need of that. You are already conquered; don't you see."

"You will pay dreadfully for this! You have killed several of my people."

"Not a man of them, unless the scare shall have done so. For, look you, my dear colonel, we went into the fight with powder only. Not a pistol or gun was shotted!"

This made the sheriff furious. He cried—

"Bid your fellows stand off, while we fight. There is no shame in steel."

"And no shame to you, my dear colonel, in being shot at with empty pistols. Pooh! pooh! man, can't you relish a good army-joke, now that you're a peace officer. Put up your sword, and let us all in and have a stoup of Jamaica. I am in a lather of perspiration."

But the sheriff was not so easily appeased, and the dispute went on, and, in spite of Porgy's good humor—which, now that he had gained the victory and enjoyed his jest—was of the most genial description, there is no saying what might have been the upshot of the business; when suddenly the tread of horses, and the wheels of a carriage, were heard rumbling toward them. And soon the cumbrous vehicle drew nigh, drawn, as was frequently the fashion in these days, by four horses. Then a voice, well known to both of the parties, cried out from the carriage—

"Halloo! There! My brave fellows, what have you been about?"

The new-comer was the gallant and highly popular Charles Cotesworth Pinckney—a man, who, but for the curse of party, would have been subsequently made president of the United States.

"Ha! my dear Pinckney," answered Porgy, "you have come in the nick of time to keep the peace. I have won a victory, but because I have been merciful, I can not quiet those whom I should have slain."

Pinckney got out of the carriage, stepped between the parties, and heard the story. He had sped, by the way, with all haste after the sheriff, to prevent difficulties. The latter, goaded by M'Kewn, and somewhat mortified by the stories spread about at his expense, touching his former fortune—stories very much exaggerated—had evaded the friends of Porgy, and set out for his arrest, and to effect the levy, without their knowledge. As soon, however, as the fact was known, Pinckney started in pursuit. He came too late; and the difficulties of his mission were increased. But he was not the person to despair. He had that twofold capacity, at once of persuasion and command, which rarely suffered him to fail in influencing the minds of men

"What, colonel," he said to the sheriff,—"angry still, after what you hear. This must not be. We must reconcile you to our friend, who, as we all know, will have his jest though he dies for it."

"Not at my expense—at least."

"Surely not," said Pinckney, "and he will atone for every hurt of honor that he has inflicted. I promise you this, my dear fellow, *on my honor*; and now let us into his dwelling, and see with what sort of hospitality he will receive us."

"In with you all,—good friends, all!" cried Porgy; "and if nothing short of Glen-Eberley will suffice to satisfy you, Mr. Sheriff, why, it is at your service. There's my hand on it,—and now in!"

The sheriff was somewhat reluctant still; but Porgy seized his hand and shook it with vehemence, and Pinckney repeated his assurance that every atonement should be made. The knight of the shire was forced to yield. Crooks, the deputy, now relieved from the incumbent weight of Millhouse's body, was not so easily pacified,—but, when Pinckney becoming impatient, told the sergeant to resume his captive, and the seat which he had occupied with such effect, the little fellow cooled off, and followed the rest into the house. Here, for the first time, Porgy was enabled to welcome his old associates, George Dennison and Oakenburg, which he did with a hearty satisfaction that quite disturbed the sergeant. He muttered *sotto voce*:—

"Lord ha' marey! now they're here, they'll stick, and *nara* one of 'em able to airn the salt to his hominy!"

Let us suppose the efforts of Pinckney to be successful in reconciling the conflicting parties, and persuading the sheriff to receive the apologies of Porgy, for all that had been personally offensive between them; apologies which Porgy gave without a moment's scruple. But Crooks was to be hushed with other coin. His hurts of honor were to be settled by some regard to his pocket; and, after a little while, an exact estimate was made, in money, of the amount of injury done to his self-esteem and honor. These affairs once adjusted, the question next was confined wholly to the satisfaction of the judgment in the case of *M'Kewn* v. *Porgy*—a matter of more difficult arrangement. We will leave the three prominent persons, Pinckney, the sheriff,

and Porgy, engaged in this discussion, in the parlor, after supper was over; while Sergeant Millhouse, well supplied with pipes and Jamaica, did the honors below stairs to the other guests. Frampton had suddenly disappeared after the "skrimmage." He excused himself only to George Dennison, and to no other parties did his absence occasion any surprise. It was probably two hours after nightfall when he reappeared, and, suddenly making his way into the parlor where the three principal persons were yet engaged in the discussion, he called Porgy out to the piazza, and said:—

"Beg pardon, captain, for troubling you just now, but you see the matter is important. There's the squatter, Bostwick, he's got back to his family. Pomp saw him in the swamp, and when he told me, I put Pomp and another to watch the squatter's house. They saw little Dory go out, and one of them watched her all the way to M'Kewn's; and to-night, a little after dark, M'Kewn went in to the squatter's cabin. He's with him now, and they both may be caught together. I'm a thinking that if you was to seize upon the squatter, right away, and give him a good scare with the rope or the hickories, you would get back that mahogany box of the widow Eveleigh, and find out all about your missing property, and the attack on the widow."

Lance Frampton was a brief, comprehensive speaker. He hardly employed more words than these in making this revelation. Porgy felt its vast importance, and rightly estimated the utility of prompt proceedings. He, at once, took Lance into the parlor and communicated his intelligence to his associates. Pinckney was at once upon his feet.

"We must act *instanter*. The squatter must be seized; but legally. Here's the proper officer. I can take your lieutenant's affidavit and yours, embodying your suspicions, and issue the warrants, which will suffice to get one or both these parties into custody—the rest may follow; but rope or hickory, unless by the proper hands, must not be thought of. Call your deputies,—a couple of them, Mr. Sheriff,—while I prepare the papers."

Five minutes sufficed for this. The parties, Pinckney at their head, prepared to set forth; Porgy was about to accompany them, but Pinckney objected.

"Better not you, Porgy. Your entanglements are quite suffi-

cient already, and you'll be for grappling this fellow M'Kewn on the spot, and pulling his nose, or doing some outrageous thing. Besides, your debt to him makes your appearance, at the time of his answer to such charges, a rather delicate proceeding."

"If I don't go with you, may I be ——!" was the reply of the doughty captain, putting his pistols in his belt.

"Obstinate as ever! But, as you will. How far is it? Do we ride!"

"The horses are ready now, sir," was the reply of the prompt lieutenant—"Better ride to Cattle Branch, captain, and then get down and walk."

"Right, Lance, right! we must take the rascals by surprise. Gentlemen, to saddle."

CHAPTER LXIV.

THE BOX OF PAPERS, AND HOW PAID FOR.

UNDER the guidance of Lance Frampton, the party proceeded to the Cattle Branch. Here, they alighted, fastened their horses in the shelter of a bit of wood, and went forward on foot. Attracted by the gleam of fire in the forest, Lance Frampton stole away to see by what it was occasioned, and, without allowing himself to be seen, he found the wife of the squatter, little Dory, and the two other children, cowering about the blaze of a fire which they had kindled about two hundred yards from the house of the squatter. Here, wrapped in blankets, and housing themselves as well as they could against the night wind, they waited the conclusion of the conference between the confederates in the cabin.—Having ascertained, scout-fashion, all the necessary particulars in the case, Frampton rejoined his party and made his report. They went forward, stealthily, toward the house, and imitating the precautions of their guide, succeeded in approaching it without disturbing the inmates. Through chinks between the logs, from which the clay-plastering had fallen out, and by the light of a couple of tallow-candles which burned in the chamber

of the squatter, they could see pretty much all that took place within. Using our privilege, we can witness the proceedings on easier terms, and are able to report them from the beginning.

Once in the chamber, the family shut out, and secure, as he thought, against surveillance, M'Kewn approached the bedside of the squatter, who raised himself up in the bed to receive him.

"What's made you sick, Bostwick?" said the visiter.

"Sick! O! I aint much sick; aint too sick to do business. Business always make me well ag'in. The sight of the gould a-coming in, is always a cure for me, no matter what's the sort of ailment a troubling me. Hev' you brought the gould, M'Kewn?"

"But you are sick, Bostwick, and very sick too," said M'Kewn, seeing the fiery eyes, the blotched features, and feeling the burning hand of the patient. "You have a scorching fever, and look ill out of the eyes."

"Oh! don't you mind about the eyes. I tell you, ef they once sees the guineas, and a smart chaince of 'em, they'll git well, and I'll git well directly. Hev' you brought them guineas? I must hev' 'em, and a great count of 'em too, M'Kewn."

"Guineas! Why, man, you need physic now, rather than guineas. I must send you some to cure this fever."

"You! Send me physic! You! Never! I'll not take any physic of *your* mixing, M'Kewn. You're not the one that I'll app'int to bile my gruel."

"Why, you don't think I'd poison you, do you?"

"That's jest what I'd be afear'd of, M'Kewn. You see, I knows you, and you knows me, and I tell you, there's only one sort of physic I'm willing to take out of your hands, and that's *gould* physic, M'Kewn. *Hev'* you brought them guineas?"

"I have! There are a hundred guineas here, in this bag; but I'll not give you one of them, Bostwick, until I see that box of papers—until I get it delivered into my own hands."

"You won't, you say?"

"No! I will not!"

"Then, you don't git 'em, that's all!" and the sick man hustled the pillow, and a portion of the bed-clothes, in a heap beneath his head, with an appearance of care which did not escape the observation of his visiter. "Look you, M'Kewn," continued the

squatter; "you don't hev' them papers onless I gits *five* hundred guineas."

"Five hundred guineas! Why, you're mad."

"No I aint; I'm only sensible. I'm in want of a *heap* of gould. I'm a-guine to buy a farm and seven niggers for Dory. —I'm a-guine to set her up, and make a lady of her. And she shill be fine; and shill hev' fine clothes, silk and velvet: and shill hev' niggers to work for her in the corn-field, and a maid-sarvant to wait upon her, and help put on her clothes; and you're to pay for all."

"The devil. I am!"

"Yes! The devil you air! and bekaise you air a born devil, and bekaise, jest now, I'm your master, and kin make you work for me, I'll make my child a lady of fortin'. So you'll hev' to fork up the money, and do it han'some. Ef I kain't git her settled, han'some, out of my airnings, I'd like to know what's the use of all my rapscalities. Five hundred guineas is little enough to aix you; that is, after the hundred guineas you've got in the bag.—Them you must leave with me, and go and git jest five hundred more, and when I sees them counted out, fair before me, ten piles and fifty in every one on them, then you shill hev' the box of papers; and not a minute before."

And here the squatter grasped the heap beneath his pillow, with the air of a man making sure of his possessions. The keen eye of M'Kewn again observed the action, and his mind drew instantly the proper inference from it. He observed, also, that the excitement of the squatter was increasing. His eyes, now more accustomed to the degree of light in the chamber, M'Kewn was enabled to see that Bostwick was really much more an invalid than he had thought him at first; though, even the first glance had shown him that the man was very ill. He now began to suspect that his mind was wandering. This conjecture was reached, not so much because of the extravagance of his demands, as from the wild and glittering terror of his eyes, which were dilating, as if about to burst out of their sockets, and shone like coals of fire; from the fitfulness of his voice, and the spasmodic action which accompanied his utterance. To temporise with such a patient was his present policy.

"Well, but Bostwick, you surely can't expect me to pay this money until I see the box of papers."

"It's that very thing you hev' to do! You hev' to trust me to the eend of the business. I *knows* what I've got, and knows its valley to you. I knows you kain't do without them papers; and I knows what'll happen ef them papers gits away from my hands to another pusson's. Kin you guess what would happen ef the widow Ev'legh got 'em, or Cappin Porgy, or eeny other honest white man—that knows *you*, and how you stands? What's the valley to them? Ef 'taint five hundred guineas, I'll give 'em for nothin'. *You* shan't have 'em for a shilling less!"

"Well, Bostwick, I don't say that they will not be worth the money, but I say that you must let me see them *first*, that I may be sure of it."

"You don't see 'em, M'Kewn, tell the money's on the nail. You *shill* trust me, and I *won't* trust *you*; for I knows you, and you're a born rascal, and I'll hang you, M'Kewn, for the pleasure of the thing, ef so be you don't fork out."

"How long will it take you to get the papers, after I bring the money?"

"How long? How short, rether! You kin hev' 'em arter that, as quick as you kin cry Jack Robinson."

"Ah! and if I bring you five hundred guineas this very night?"

"Then you kin git the papers this very night! And you better bring 'em, M'Kewn, for you see, Dory must be a lady. I must make her rich as a queen; she must be able to carry as high a head as the widow Ev'leigh, and then she kin marry young Arthur, the widow's son; and he likes her, and is guine to marry her, jest so soon as I makes a lady of her, and gives her a fortin' of niggers and a farm; and you shall be at the wedding, M'Kewn, though, by blisters, I should like to see you hanging up, with your feet upon nothing, only the minute arter. But, bring the guineas, and make haste about it. Lord! How my head aches and jumps. How my eyes burn! Bring the guineas; I'm a-longing to git shet of you, and to call in Dory, and make her a lady. Be quick, and you shill hev' the cussed papers, and ef you aint quick, I'll be a hanging you like a brute warmint. Oh! the head, how its a-busting!"

He sank upon the pillow as he ended, with an evident show of increased suffering.

"If I were quite sure, Bostwick, that you could produce the papers as soon as I brought the money! But you told me that they were hid away in the swamp where nobody could find them."

"Swamp—h–ll! So they were, hid in the swamp once upon a time; but, hain't I been thar' sence I got back; hain't I got 'em *here*, in this very house, whar' I kin put hands on 'em jest when I wants them? Git the guineas, I say, and don't be foolish with your questions; and when I sees Dory a lady of fortin', with her farm and niggers, then you shill hev' the box, and much good may it do you."

Again the squatter sank back upon the pillow, with his hands feebly and nervously feeling about it, as if to make himself se cure of his possession. M'Kown now varied his game.

"I don't believe a word you say, Bostwick, and now, let me tell you, I saw the fellow, Tony Hines, at Smyzer's, he told me that you had got no box, no papers—"

"Ha! Yes! Don't I know that you saw Tony Hines, at Smyzer's; and don't I know that you gin him physic, and called yourself a doctor; and you p'isoned him with your physic, and killed him. Don't I know? Does anything you do hide itself from me? I tracked you, like a sarpent, sence I got back; and I knows all your doings, sence I've been gone, as well as before. That's another thing agin you;—your p'isoning of Tony Hines."

"He's not dead, is he?"

"Sure as you handled him! I seed old Smyzer, and hairn all about you. But don't be aggravatin' me, I tell you, for I kain't stand it. My head is jest a busting now. Ef you aggravates me, I'll hang you! I'll git my gould from another pusson, I'll sell you in the market; I'll send off for Cappin Porgy to come to me. You hear, do you?"—almost screaming. "And now fork out the money, and let me see Dory a lady, with a fortin'. It's as much as your neck's worth ef she don't git it right away."

"You shall have the money, Bostwick. There *are five* hundred guineas, not *one*, in this bag."

"Let me feel it—it don't look big enough for so much. You're a lying to me, now; I knows you."

"No! let me see your box of papers. Hold it in your own hands, while I count out the money."

"Well! I'll do *that*."

And the sick squatter made an effort to rise and turn about, while one of his hands began to remove the bed-clothes from about the pillow. M'Kewn eagerly watched him, the bag suspended in his hand! The squatter suddenly paused, looked round at this moment, and caught the glance of the Scotchman's eye.

"You're a great scamp, M'Kewn. I knows you. Oh! you're a warmint! You don't see the box till I sees the money counted out. It's here, you born thief, and rapscallion, but I won't trust you so much as to let you see it, ontell the money's put down here, the yallow birds, all a-flying about me, on the white bed-clothes, where I kin count 'em. Plank 'em down, and when I sees 'em, then you shill see the papers."

Once more the squatter sank back exhausted, muttering spasmodically—

"Plank 'em down—all for Dory—lady, fine fortin'—Arthur Ev'leigh. Ha! ha! ha! Don't I see? Don't I know it'll be? Dora Ev'leigh. *Mrs.* Dorothy Ev'leigh."

M'Kewn was apparently disposed to do as he was required—to open his bag of guineas, and to count them out upon the bed; and the squatter, though sinking back exhausted, was yet keenly observant of all the movements of his associate. But, either the demonstration was not seriously begun by the Scotchman, or his purpose suddenly underwent a change. While he looked upon the seemingly faint and feeble condition of the squatter, other purposes, which he had already contemplated, rapidly ripened for performance in his brain. The thoughts occurred to him—

"Shall I continue at the mercy of this miserable wretch, when a little determination is all that is needful to extricate myself from his power. He has the box of papers beneath his pillow. Of his possession of it, no one knows but myself. He can give no evidence of its contents. No one sees us. The family is all away. Why should I not possess myself of this testimony and destroy it? He can not oppose me. He has not strength for it. In a moment it is mine. In another moment I give it to the

flames. I were a fool to hesitate—to suffer this auspicious moment to escape me!"

The stillness of the scene—the loneliness of the neighborhood—night and silence—the feebleness of the squatter—his own necessities and apprehensions—all conspired to persuade M'Kewn to seize upon the desired possession. He saw directly where it lay, and, though the head of the squatter rested upon it, no great effort would be required, he thought, to tear it from under him. The temptation was irresistible; and while Bostwick was looking to see the bag of gold laid bare before him, M'Kewn suddenly thrust it back into the pocket of the great overcoat he wore, and, in the same instant, seized upon the pile of bed-clothes which covered the box, beneath the pillow, and, with a violent grasp, tore it away upon the floor. The head of the squatter, in consequence of the jerk, was thrown off, with the pillow, from the box. The desired treasure was exposed, fairly, before the eyes of the Scotchman. He seized it eagerly; but before he could drag it from its place, the squatter had grappled with it also; screaming out his fury, at the same time, in the wildest accents.

"Ha! you born thief, en' that's your game, is it? But two kin play at that game, my honey; and we'll see who's the best man."

The squatter was now up in bed. Even in this situation, and sick, M'Kewn found him no easy customer. Lithe, active, and accustomed to every sort of toil and encounter, his strength was really surprising. For awhile the parties struggled for the box; but soon the squatter, more accustomed to the emergencies of such a strife, suddenly relaxed his hold upon the object of contention, and caught hold of M'Kewn himself. His fingers were soon about the throat of the Scotchman. The latter found it no slight matter to break away from the tenacious grasp of his opponent. But, still grasping the box, he finally succeeded in doing so. But he was not thus to escape in triumph. Bostwick bounded after him, out of the bed, and fastened upon him again with the claws of a young tiger. The fearful conflict was renewed. After awhile M'Kewn bore him back successfully, and thrust him again upon the bed; but even then he failed to throw him off. The squatter clung to him with a spasmodic energy,

which seemed to increase his powers; and, desperate by the opposition he encountered, M'Kewn fiercely smote him upon the head with the box, twice, thrice—holding it in both hands—the blows coming down with a heavy, dull sound, as if upon a bank of earth.

With a howl, rather than a cry, Bostwick seized his assailant with a new hold; taking him now with both arms, about the neck, and drawing him down upon him, where he lay. Here, while almost fainting from his hurts, and the exhaustion of such a struggle, he strove, with his last wolfish instincts, to bite and rend, with his teeth, the enemy whom he could no longer injure with his hands. At this stage of the proceedings, and before either of the combatants could conjecture the proximity of other persons, Porgy burst open the door of the hovel with a single stroke of his feet, and rushed into the room, followed closely by Pinckney, the sheriff, and the rest of the party.

They did not appear a moment too soon. The head of the squatter was bleeding freely from several hurts; his teeth were already sunk with the ferocious passion of the wild beast, into the throat of his assailant. So fast was the hold which he had taken, that it was difficult to tear M'Kewn from his grasp. The effort to do so dragged the squatter from his bed upon the floor, where he lay like a baffled and wounded panther, writhing and shrieking in his agony and disappointment.

M'Kewn lost all presence of mind, all strength, the moment he found himself in the presence of other parties. He had been fearfully breathed in the violent struggle through which he had gone; but it was mental paralysis from which he now suffered. A complete collapse of all the energies followed the exposure. The box fell from his nerveless grasp, and was instantly picked up by Lance Frampton. He staggered back toward the bed, upon which he sank; his jaws fell; and his strength seemed barely enough to allow him to cover his face with his hands In a single instant he became conscious that all was lost; and that he was self-delivered into the hands of his most powerful enemies.

"You are my prisoner!" said the sheriff to M'Kewn, laying his hand on his shoulder.

He had not a word to answer; thoroughly overwhelmed by

the circumstances of his situation, and the fact that he had been caught *flagranti delicto.*

"That's it! that's right!" cried the squatter, whose loss of blood had brought him fairly to his senses, and who now, quite as promptly as the Scotchman, appreciated all the difficulties of his situation. "Take him prisoner," he cried—"I'm the witness agin him, the infernal thief and tory, and murderer and villain; that stole your niggers, Cappin Porgy; I carried him forty-three on em that never kin git back—all off your place—and he sold 'em to Moncrieff; and many more besides; but here's the box; it's got the pretickilar papers to convict him and to hang him, the villain, and the nigger thief, and murderer. You seed him how he wanted to murder me in my own bed, and all to git the papers, and to hush up my evidence; but he'll hev' the justice done to him at last, and I'll be a witness agin him ef they'll let me go free, and pardon me for what I did for him. I did it only for him."

"You are not forced to speak," said the sheriff. "It is just as you please—to be silent, or tell all that you know."

"I'll tell all I know! I'm ready and willing, of my own free consent."

"Stop!" said Pinckney; "let him be sworn. I have a reason for it. Is there a bible in the house?"

Porgy was able to find one. He knew where Dory kept it. It was produced. Pinckney administered the oath; and the squatter, in the hearing of the man he accused, made a tolerably clean breast of it. He furnished a long and fearful history, the character of which we can well conjecture from the portions already put into our possession. The statements were all taken down as delivered. M'Kewn sank upon the bed utterly prostrate, and incapable even of denial. The miserable criminal absolutely swooned under the prospect of discovery and conviction.

"And now," cried the squatter, when he was done, "you'll git me my pardon, won't you? I've told all! Them papers in the box will tell you something, too. He set me on to do what I did, and he's got all the profit, the etarnal villain, that wanted to murder me in my own bed, and me a sick man. You'll git me off, cappin and you, Colonel Pinckney—I knows you, colo-

nel! You'll git me my pardon, from the gov'nor, when I tells all afore the court?"

"You must seek your pardon of heaven, my poor fellow," was the answer of Pinckney, made with proper solemnity. "The only court which you will now be summoned before, is that of the Eternal Judge of the world. Humble yourself before him with all the haste you can, and repent your sins, and pray for the mediation of Christ in your behalf. I deem it only proper to tell you that you are even now a dying man! Gentlemen, the sooner the most of you leave this room, the better; this unhappy man is dying of the small-pox!"

CHAPTER LXV.

CATASTROPHE.

Those only who know the terrors inspired by the small-pox, at the period of which we write, can properly appreciate the panic which was occasioned by the speech of Pinckney. Among the people of the country, in particular, this scourge of humanity was held a worse danger than the plague of the East. Men who would fearlessly brave the field of battle, fled, at the bare mention of this pest, without once looking behind them. It was so on this occasion. Our excellent captain of partisans was among the first to find his way out of the hovel. He was followed by all but Pinckney, the sheriff, his deputy, and the prisoner M'Kewn. These, as citizens, were more accustomed to the pest, and had, we suppose, been all inoculated. They remained in the farther prosecution of the work before them. At the door, Pinckney proceeded to suggest to Porgy the course to be pursued in respect to coincident matters.

"You must see to this man's family, captain. Have them bestowed in safety, in some place where they can not come in contact with persons not inoculated. If you or Mrs. Eveleigh have any servants who have had the disease, send them here to attend upon this wretched creature. He will scarcely live another day; but send for Dr. Warley, and, in the meantime, let him

have some cooling medicines, and proper food. But see that you keep his wife away, unless she has been inoculated—which I suppose very unlikely."

Porgy understook all the necessary commissions. We will leave him to execute them, which, we may add, in this place, he did with equal diligence and effect. Returning to the chamber of the squatter, Pinckney found him raving.

"The small-pox!" he cried. "Don't you tell me sich d——d foolishness. 'Taint no small-pox, I tell you! It's only fever—it's a mighty hot fever, I know, and this fight with that etarnal villain thar, has only made it worser and hotter;—but 'taint no small-pox. Whar was I to git the small-pox, I wants to know; me living in the swamps and here. 'Spose I was in town! was that to give me small-pox, when I was thar a day only? I know better! I know 'taint small-pox, and I've got the strength of a horse; yet you tell me I'm a dying man—me a dying man, and sich a mortal sinner! Lord God! ef I'm so sick as all that, send for the doctor. Thar's gould to pay him—thar, in that box. Thar's a hundred and fifty guineas in that box. Mind you, it's Dory's money; and thar's a bag of guineas in that bloody villain's pocket, and by rights that's Dory's money too. Remember Dory! Lord, whar's Dory? Don't you let her come nigh to me, ef it's small-pox I've got; but send for my wife to nuss me. She's somewhar about in the woods. You'll see by the fire. Send her here? What's she doing in the woods when I'm a wanting her here. Oh! Lord, that I should come to this; and thar you stand, and a doing nothing for me, and yet you says I'm a dying of the small-pox. Yet, don't I know it's a lie. It's only done to skear me! And what does you want to skear me for any more? Hevn't I told you all I know about that bloody scamp. Ef you wants me to tell about the skrimmage, and how I had to shoot Dick Norris, you're clean mistaken. I won't say a word; I'll shet up, and you shall never pry betwixt my teeth to see what's under my tongue. No! nor you shaint know about the blowing up of the vessel. She blow'd up, and what hed I to do with it. Thar was a train—I knows that—and it ended in the three kags of gunpowder; but who seed me put fire to it, I wants to know? Whar's the pusson here kin say he seed it, I'd like to know! No! thar's no pusson;

and why should I hev the small-pox ontill you prove agin me all these things. The small pox, indeed! That's mighty foolish What should give me, a strong man, usen to the city, the blasted small-pox? I laughs at it, I tell you! I laughs! Ha! ha! ha! and I snaps my fingers at it. Does that look like a dying man. A dying man! Lord God, hev marcy ef so be its true what these men says! Oh! my God, hev marcy upon me a sinner. I know I'm a black sinner, and blasted through and through with the p'ison of sin; but ef I am, air you guine to let me die without a doctor, and arter I tel'd you everything I know'd about that murdering villain thar? Oh! Lord, send for the doctor. Don't leave me to die. I kaint die! I won't die. I hev a heap to do, to buy the niggers and the farm, and to see Dory a lady of fortin! Small-pox be d——d! 'Taint no small-pox! It's a hot fever only. Give me some water. Oh! how it burns. I'm a burning up. I'm all blisters, and nobody to help me. Take him away, that bloody villain thar; I'm all afire so long as I sees him. Take him away and hitch him up. Ef I'm to die, I know who's to hang. We goes together. The old Horny swore it should be so, and I tel'd him! Oh! the black villain, he's got to hang, and that's the satisfaction I'll hev at the last. I knows it, and he knows it too! He shall hang, like Dick Norris, and nobody to save his neck from cracking, by a bullet through the head. He don't desarve a friend. He don't But, oh! Lord, the fire in my witals. Whar's that woman—whar's my wife—to give me drink? The small-pox! But don't you let Dory come. Even ef I dies, she's to be a lady of fortin. Thar's the money. It's all for her!"

We need not listen farther to these ravings, though they were still, for some time longer, poured into the ears of Pinckney and the sheriff, with unceasing volume, and wonderful rapidity. The fever was rapidly increasing in the brain. The disease was doing its work with fearful speed and vigor. The terrible secrets of a life of crime were delivered without a consciousness, and the strong men shuddered as they heard, hardly deeming it possible, from their previous experience, that society should possess an individual capable of such a revelation of evil deeds, the performance of his own hands.

After a brief consultation with the sheriff, the latter, with a

couple of his assistants, took M'Kewn away. The latter was passive in the hands of his guards. They conducted him to his own house, and securing him in his chamber they put watches upon the apartment, so that he could not escape. Porgy, meanwhile, conveyed the wife of the squatter, with Dory and the two other children, to his own dwelling, in which he asigned them the best apartments. Lance Frampton went after Doctor Warley, the ablest and nearest physician upon the river, while a couple of elderly slaves, both of whom had passed through the fearful disease which was consuming the life of the squatter, were sent by Mrs. Eveleigh to attend upon him. Cooling medicines, beverages, and delicacies, such as might be thought calculated to alleviate the sufferings, or meet the wants of the patient, were provided, and, by dawn the next day, he was in as good hands, and as carefully attended, as was possible under the circumstances. Doctor Warley was soon with him; but, the first glance at the patient showed that all efforts would be made in vain. The type of the disease was singularly malignant; and exposure in the swamps, violent passions, and vexing strifes and anxieties, had added fearfully to its virulence. Within the time predicted by Pinckney, he was a corpse.

A conference ensued between Pinckney, the sheriff and M'Kewn, at the house of the latter. He was still in close keeping. The charges against him were of a sufficiently serious character, involving not simply his fortune but his life. He felt all the dangers of his situation. In the first feeling of utter hopelessness, he humbly entreated the mercy and forbearance of the prosecutors. The better to secure this, he produced the bond and mortgage of Porgy—he entered satisfaction upon them, and upon the judgments which he also held against the rest of his debtor's property. He confessed to a participation in the sale of the forty-three slaves abducted from the captain's plantation, as charged by the squatter, and as confirmed by the documents, now open before them, from the box of the widow. There was, perhaps, no confession necessary. The conviction would be quite

complete without it. But M'Kewn's policy was to make a merit of necessity. As he began to recover his confidence — removed from the fearful sights and scenes in the cottage of the squatter — he ventured to urge upon Pinckney and the sheriff, the concessions he had voluntarily made as a plea for some indulgence. He tendered bail, but neither of them was authorized to receive it. He pleaded for a mitigation of the rigors of his confinement; but, on this point, Pinckney referred the matter wholly to the sheriff, who, thereupon, instead of lessening the sharpness of his watch, increased it, leaving one of his most trusty deputies within the chamber of the criminal. This man, M'Kewn attempted to bribe with a large amount of money in gold. But the deputy was invincible. The criminal opened the chest within his chamber,—the contents of which we have already seen, when the squatter was permitted the same privilege,—and drew forth a pile of the glittering treasure, so dazzling to greedy eyes and drowsy consciences.

"You shall have it all," said he, in a husky whisper, "only secure the fellow in the passage until I can get off. You can both make off with it—with all that you can carry,—and you need not then dread exposure."

The amount thus proffered was a severe temptation for a poor man; but this one,—who, by the way, had not the courage to stand the threatened lead of Captain Porgy and his veterans,—had yet the firmness to say to the tempter—"Get thee behind me." It might be that his virtue was governed by his fears, and by the knowledge that there were other watchers besides himself, but we prefer, for the sake of humanity, to believe in the fellow's virtue. We continually do mischief to morals, by assuming too low a standard of virtue for the poor.

Deceived and baffled, M'Kewn grew morose. Food was brought him at the proper hour. He refused to eat. The dinner-hour passed. Night came on. He would take no supper. But he drank, if he did not eat. He drank till his cheeks were flushed, and his eyes wore a ferocious and glazed expression, which the deputy dreaded very much to behold. About an hour after night, the sheriff entered the chamber, and said—

"This man Bostwick, is evidently dying. Dr. Warley thinks he can not live through the night."

The teeth of M'Kewn gnashed fiercely.

"What is that to me! Let him die and—"

The sentence remained unfinished. The sheriff readily guessed the words with which he would have supplied the blank. He turned away and left the prisoner; but, seeing his condition, and suspecting in some degree the cause, he removed the decanter of Jamaica which stood upon the table. M'Kewn saw the act but said nothing. He possibly felt that it would be useless to expostulate. At twelve that night, the squatter died, howling, in the wildest agonies, physical and mental, with horrible curses on his lips. An imprecation upon the head of M'Kewn, while his fingers seemed to grapple and read something in air before him, finished the awful scene, which Pinckney witnessed with the physician. Glad to escape into fresh air, he mounted his horse, the moment the scene was over, and galloped off to Glen-Eberley. Here supper awaited him, and the partisan, and sheriff, with their companions. They had scarcely seated themselves and begun to partake, when they heard the tramplings of a horse at full speed, and, a moment after, one of the deputies, left in charge of M'Kewn, bounded into the room, his cheeks pale, and his eyes wild with fright.

"How now, my good fellow, what's the matter?" demanded the sheriff. "What has scared you?"

"Oh! Sir, the prisoner's blowed his brains out."

All the party started to their feet.

"Have the horses got, Lance!" said Porgy promptly.

"How was it?" demanded the sheriff. The deputy's story ran as follows:—

It appears that the moody sullenness of M'Kewn continued. He demanded more drink. It was denied him, according to the instructions of the sheriff. He suddenly supplied himself with more from a closet, and his keeper did not think himself authorized to take it from him by force. As the night advanced his potations increased in frequency, and his sullenness and ferocity were succeeded by a fit of extreme nervous susceptibility. He would start up and exclaim passionately, then sink down in his chair and cover his face with his hands; but he could not continue long in this or any other position. At length, he suddenly confronted the keeper.

"Let me out," said he, "I must go and see Bostwick. He has sent for me to come. He calls for me. I hear him."

The keeper refused.

"Will you go to him then for me? I will pay you. See. Look here. You shall have all this, if you will go to him with a message."

And he opened the chest and, kneeling by it, took up several pieces of gold, which he counted from one palm to the other The keeper still refusing, he flung the gold back into the chest, —and seemed about to rise, when he suddenly exclaimed—

"Don't you hear him? He is there! He is here! He hales me to him. I must go!"

And he seemed to follow with his eyes the motion of a person unseen. Then he threw himself into an attitude, still over the chest, as if about to struggle with a foe.

"I will never go," he cried. "To the gallows, yourself, wretch; but you do not carry me. No! No! I defy you. The devil, you say! The devil! Pshaw! I am not to be frightened in that way."

Then, as if suddenly filled with terror, he crouched and buried his head in the chest—crying out—

"He hales me away—he is too strong! Help! Help! I can not stand it!" and, rising, with a cry, from the chest, the deputy, for the first time, saw that he had a pistol in each hand. With these he seemed to confront some unseen enemy. He made no demonstrations upon the guard, who did not dare to approach him, thus weaponed. At length, as if about to be overcome, he retreated to the opposite side of the room, crying out—

"Do not press me to the wall. If you do,—if you dare—Oh! my God—my God! He will come!"

With these words, he discharged one of the pistols at the imaginary object, then cried, while every limb trembled with horror—

"It went through him, and he does not fall. He comes still. Oh!" with a choking cry—"His fingers are upon my throat! Oh! God, have mercy!"

Thus speaking, he clapped the other pistol to his own head, and, with the crash of the report, sank down in a heap upon the floor, utterly lifeless, with his forehead entirely blown away.

Such was the story told by the guard. According to the statement of time, there could not have been five minutes between the death of the two miserable criminals. Enough!

"Draw the curtain close,
And let us in to meditation."

CHAPTER LXVI.

THE GRAPES ARE SOUR!

It was a remarkable proof of providential interposition—so thought in those days at least—that not one of the persons who came in contact with the squatter in his last illness, caught the small-pox from him. Yet his wife, little Dory, and the two other children, had been, for three days at least, constantly in the sick man's chamber. This was held a wonderful proof of God's gracious favor; and to those who knew the contagious character of that malignant pest, it was certainly a very remarkable circumstance.

After a proper interval, the humble family was again permitted to commune with its former patrons. Mrs. Eveleigh took Dory into her house, and the united appropriations of the widow and our captain, made ample provision for the future comfort of the mother and the other children, in a little farm of her own, where she dwelt for ever after, in a condition of humble comfort, which left her little to desire. Porgy gave her an old negro, and the widow Eveleigh a young one. Little Dory had a teacher provided for her, and, in a superior society, and with proper education, the native talents and graces of the child, daily exhibited new blooms, and the sweetest developments. In process of time, when she grew to womanhood, her charms made themselves felt in every heart with which her own came in contact, until—but let us not anticipate. Let us return to our principal parties.

Glen-Eberley, by the events recorded in our last chapter, was made secure to its proprietor. Our captain of partisans was relieved of all his embarrassments. His debt to Mrs. Eveleigh was not of this order. The profits of the plantation were quite ade-

quate, with a few years of indulgence, to liquidate this, and all other obligations of a pecuniary nature. Porgy, at last, found shelter beneath his fig-tree, with none to make him afraid. He had his friends about him, his singing-bird, and his puzzle in a bottle. George Dennison and Doctor Oakenburg, much to the disquiet of Millhouse, became portions of the establishment. The one furnished the ballads for the evening fireside; the other was content to provoke the wit of others, without possessing a spark of it, himself. The sergeant still delivered the law from his self-established tripod. He was still an oracle who suffered no dog to bark. Lance Frampton was a frequent visiter, and so once more, was Arthur Eveleigh, satisfied to seek good fellowship, and piquant matter of remark, though still occasionally suspicious of the captain's inclinings to his mother. On this subject, however, he no longer ventured to exhibit his boyish petulance. The one stern rebuke of his otherwise gentle and affectionate mother, had proved quite sufficient to curb, at least for the present, the young tiger striving within him; and, to sum up in a word, Glen-Eberley presented to the eye the condition of a well-managed household, in which the parties were all at peace with themselves and one another.

The same thing might be said of the neighborhood. The genial moods prevailing in the one household radiated in all directions. Glen-Eberley became a sort of centre for the parish civilization. The charm was great—a sort of salient attraction—which drew the gentry, all around, within the sphere of its genial, yet provocative influences. Free of anxiety, Porgy resumed his ancient spirit. The piquancy of his society, was everywhere acknowledged; and, with the sergeant and Doctor Oakenburg as his foils, the humor of our captain of partisans was irresistible. Fun and philosophy were strangely mingled in him, and they wrought together in unison. To rise from a practical jest into fields of fanciful speculation, was an habitual exercise with our camp philosopher. To narrate the experiences through which he had gone, delivering history and biography, anecdote and opinion, with the ease of a well-bred gentleman over his wine and walnuts, was to him an art familiar as the adjustment of his neck-cloth.—And these things were all delivered with a spirit and a quaintness, giving them wonderful relish, and which was peculiarly his own

Thus the days glided by as if all were winged with sunshine.—Thus the nights escaped all efforts to delay them, too brief for the enjoyment which they brought. It may be that we shall some days depict these happy times, the "Humors of Glen-Eberley," even as they were well remembered by many, thirty years ago, in all that cluster of parishes which lie between the Ashley and the eastern margin of the Savannah; but, at present, we can refer to them only. Enough, that peace reigned in the household, under the strong will, and the happy temperament of its chief; that the dangers which threatened from without, were all overcome, in consequence of the events already recorded; the sheriff had been soothed by ample apologies from Porgy, to which Pinckney easily persuaded him; and Crooks, the deputy, seasonably sauced with good words and hush-money, was easily persuaded to believe that his digestion was totally unhurt by the unnatural sort of repast which he had been made to swallow by the lawless partisans. Tom, we may here mention, was bought back from the widow Eveleigh, and received a gift of himself, from Porgy, which he cunningly rejected.

"No! no! maussa," he cried, with a sly shake of the head, "I kain't t'ink ob letting you off dis way. Ef *I* doesn't b'long to *you*, *you* b'longs to *me*! You hab for keep dis nigger long as he lib; and him for keep you. You hab for fin' he dinner, and Tom hab for cook 'em. Free nigger no hab any body for fin' 'em he bittle [victuals]; and de man wha' hab sense and good maussa, at de same time, he's a d——n pretickilar great big fool, for let he maussa off from keep 'em and fin' 'em. I no guine to be free no way you kin fix it; so, maussa, don't you bodder me wid dis nonsense t'ing 'bout free paper any more. I's well off whar' I is. I tell you; and I much rudder [rather] b'long to good maussa, wha' I lub, dan be my own maussa and quarrel wid mese'f ebbry day. Da's it! You yerry now? I say de wud for all! *You* b'longs to *me* Tom, jes' as much as me 'Tom b'long to *you*; and you nebber guine git *you* free paper from me long as you lib."

Thus the matter was settled, and Tom continued to the end of the chapter, the cook and proprietor of his master.

It was probably three months after his emancipation from the bond of the sheriff, that Captain Porgy, one morning, made his appearance at breakfast in full dress. His toilet had been prepared with a much nicer care than usual. His beard, which, we shame to confess, was sometimes allowed to grow wild for a week, was now carefully pruned down, leaving the smoothest possible surface of chin and cheek. He wore his buff small clothes, and his new blue coat, with great shining buttons. His neck-cloth was a sky blue silk, which had before been worn. His silk stockings were of the most irreproachable flesh color, and Pompey had done his best to polish his shoes, so as to make them emulate, in some degree, the glittering shine of the fine patent leather of the present day. The whole appearance of our captain was so fresh and so unique, that his presence caused an immediate sensation. The improvement in his toilet struck all parties. Millhouse could not forbear an exclamation, and even Oakenburg opened his eyes as he might have done at the discovery of a new and hitherto unsuspected species of rattlesnake or viper. Dennison only smiled, and said something touching the premature coming of the spring.

"We shall soon be looking for the swallows, captain."

"One would think that we had them here already," replied the captain, glancing obliquely at the enormous bowls of coffee which Pomp was pouring out at the moment. No more was said. But when, after breakfast, Porgy ordered his horse, the sergeant immediately became enlightened on the subject. The disappearance of the captain, opened the fountains of his speech.

"I knowed it," quoth the overseer—"It's to happen at last. Well, its all right. It mout ha' been done, a year ago, and 'twould ha' saved some trouble. But it's never too late. I see I'll have to open new lands."

"What's to happen?" demanded Dennison.

"Don't you see. He's gone a-courting."

"A courting?"

"Yes! he's gone off now, I'm main sartin, to pop the question to the widow. Well, she's got a smart chaince of niggers, and when they gits hitched fairly, my force will be something worth counting. I'll begin to cl'ar up my gum land to-morrow. I'll put in a hundred more acres this season. Lord! what we mout

ha' done a year ago, ef the cappin hadn't been so mealy mouthed."

"And you think he's gone to be married?" demanded Oakenburg—"a wife."

"To be sure! What else! I knows it—a wife it is! and sich a wife. She's got more than a hundred niggers, and I'll hev' to manage 'em all. But, I'll tell you what,—she'll manage you. She'll not hev' you idle fellers about the premises. A wife that's been a wife before, and's had the managing of her own affairs so long, she aint gwine to hev' her house filled up with warmin. She'll hev' a clearing, I tell you both. Singing-birds and snake-catchers aint gwine to eat her out of house and home. She'll find out what's the wartues of work in you, or she'll make you pack. Sich a broom as she'll bring with her when she comes, will sweep away all the rubbish."

The communication caused Oakenburg to look blank. Dennison, with that rare disregard of to-morrow, which is supposed to mark the poetical nature, only laughed, and went off, humming an old English ditty about stirring housewives and fairy besoms. Meanwhile, Porgy pursued his way, as the sergeant had truly conjectured, to the dwelling of the widow Eveleigh. The sergeant had no less truly divined his object in the visit. For some time past, the captain had been meditating the obligations which he owed the widow. He reflected upon what Millhouse had repeatedly suggested to him, in respect to the tender sort of interest which she was supposed to feel for himself. This might be a well-founded suggestion. Repeated examinations of the matter, in his own mind, had not persuaded him that the interest of the widow was anything more than that of a friend. Still, it was possible; and if it were really the case that she entertained any stronger sentiment in his favor, it would certainly, as the sergeant had said—"be a most cruelsome thing that she shouldn't hev' the man she wanted, pretickilarly when she had done so much for his sarcumstances." Porgy felt the ingratitude of any such neglect, on his part, supposing any such feeling on hers, and gratitude furnished a crutch where love might have faltered lamely and failed in his approaches. Repeated meditations had brought the captain to a definite conclusion; and he had armed himself to "come to the sticking

point," in other words, to make her a formal offer, of hand and heart, and household.

Fortunately for his purposes he found her at home and alone. Dory had gone on a visit to her mother.—Arthur had set forth on a deer hunt with Ffampton and some other young men. This was probably known to Porgy when he chose this day for his demonstrations. He found the widow as kind, and frank, lively and agreeable, as ever; and, after chatting on a variety of topics, he gradually brought the one subject in particular to bear. He was very nice, and as he thought, very judicious in his preliminaries. He discoursed of marriage in the abstract as a beautiful and admirably-conceived condition for human beings; he discoursed of his own wants in particular. Of course, he forbore any allusion to what might be supposed her wants also. He was pleading, and humble and solicitous, and reasonable and reverential, and touching and truthful;—and, in short, without throwing himself absolutely at her feet, he declared himself so, and without actually taking her in his arms, he avowed his great anxiety to do so;—and this, we are bound to say, in the best possible style, with proper modesty and misgiving.

The widow, with a sweet smile, laid her hand upon his own, and said as gently and tenderly, but as calmly, as possible:—

"My dear captain, why is it that men and women can not maintain an intercourse, as friends, without seeking any other relation. Is it not astonishing that such a thing should seem impossible to everybody? Now, why should not you and I be true friends, loving friends, trusting each other with the utmost confidence, coming and going when we please—welcomed when we come, regretted when we have to depart—and never perilling the intimacy of friendship by the fetters of matrimony. Can't it be so with us, my dear captain—and why not? I confess I think—I feel—that we may be very dear friends, captain, for all our lives; glad in each other's society, doing each other kindly and affectionate offices—faithful always and always confiding, as friends, and—nothing more."

The captain answered confusedly. The widow proceeded.

"The fact is, captain, if you look at the matter properly, you will see that it is quite impossible that we should marry. We should risk much and gain little by such a tie. I confess to you

that were I again to marry, I know no person to whom I should be more willing to trust my happiness than yourself."

The captain squeezed her hand.

"But, captain, I am willing to trust myself to nobody again. I have been too long my own mistress to submit to authority. I have a certain spice of independence in my temper, which would argue no security for the rule which seeks to restrain me; and you, if I am any judge of men, have a certain imperative mood which would make you very despotic, should you meet with resistance. There would be peace and friendship between us, my dear captain — nay love — so long as we maintain our separate independence; and, in this faith, I am unwilling to risk anything by any change in our relations. Let there be peace, and friendship, and love between us, — but never a word more of marriage. There is my hand, captain, in pledge of my good faith, my friendship, my affectionate interest in yourself and fortunes — my pleasure in your society — and you must be content with that. Will you, captain? For my sake, let me entreat, and please say no more of other matters."

Porgy took her hand and carried it to his lips.

"God bless you, my dear widow, and believe me grateful for what you are willing to bestow. I must be content — will be — assured of such a friendship as your heart is capable of. You are right, perhaps, and yet —"

"No doubt I am right. We know each other, and there shall be no misunderstanding between us. You must stay to dinner with me to-day, that I may be sure you feel no impatience with me."

And he stayed.

But the idea of marriage had, for the time, taken particular possession of the brain of our captain. Three days after, he rode over to see the widow Griffin; but, on this occasion, he did not take the same pains with his costume as when he visited the other widow. His dress was less pretending, and more sombre of hue. The captain knew, before he started, that the widow was alone. Lance Frampton had gone on a visit with his wife to Dorchester, the scene of some of his own exploits during the

war, and where he had some relatives. Porgy found the widow in good health and trim, and especially in good spirits. Her welcome was always genial, and she looked particularly charming, though in ordinary household gear. She was at her spinning-wheel when he came. A basket of carded cotton stood beside her, and as she drew off the threads from the wheel, approached it and retired, he thought her as graceful as a young damsel of sixteen. For the first time in his life, he fancied that spinning was a particularly picturesque performance, and wondered that he had not seen it more frequently delineated in pictures.

Mrs. Griffin was very lively and good-humored, and the captain gradually became more and more gallant. After awhile, he officiated somewhat in her operations. Now, he drew the basket of cotton to her side. Anon, when she desired to move the wheel, he caught up one end of it, while she took the other. It was thus borne into the piazza, the better to afford room for her proceedings. In the obscure situation of the cottage, off the public road, and surrounded by great shady evergreens, the piazza was scarcely less private than the hall. The feeling of privacy had its effect on Porgy. Soon, he became more frequent in the little helps he gave the widow, and, at length, when putting aside her spinning, she proceeded to reel off a pile of yarn, the captain forced away the reel, and gallantly thrust his own arms through the hanks. It was in vain that the good, simple Griffin, wondering in discomfiture at this self-humiliation on the part of the captain, strove against it. He gave her a fierce smack upon the lips with his own, and thus put an end to all her efforts to repossess herself of the thread.

Then he placed himself before her in a great chair, his arms extended to the uttermost, his eyes surveying her tenderly, while she, with downcast looks, proceeded, as the sultan ruled, to reel off the threads as well as she might from the digits of her awkward auxillary. The picture was a sufficiently ludicrous one, but it may be better fancied than described. Griffin might have seen—probably did see,—the grotesque absurdity of the scene; but Porgy was in his Arcadian mood, and certain feelings which he had in reserve, made him obtuse in respect to the queer figure which he cut in this novel employment.

He was startled into a full consciousness of his ridiculous situation, by the sudden appearance, in front of the house, on horseback, of the widow Eveleigh and her son Arthur. In the chat which the captain had kept up, tender and sentimental, and perhaps a little saucy, neither Griffin nor himself had heard the the sound of the horses, until escape was impossible. The parties were fairly caught. The first thought of the captain, when he looked up at the sudden noise and saw who were the visiters, was to fling the yarn over Griffin's head; at all events to fling it from his arms; but the mischievous threads adhered tenaciously to the broadcloth, and caught upon the buttons at his wrist, and tangled itself about his fingers, as if each thread were a spirit of disorder, sent especially for his discomfort and defeat. When he sought to rise, it fell in a mass upon his feet, and when he strove to kick it off, the feet got involved within the meshes, so that he dared not take a step forward lest he should lay himself out, at full length, along the piazza. As for the yarn, before he got out of its meshes, it was one inextricable mass of disorder, which filled the eyes of Griffin with consternation to behold.

The pair were really in most pitiable plight; an awkward consciousness of the ludicrousness of the picture they afforded to the new-comers, striking them both irresistibly for the first time. But Porgy's consciousness was particularly vexing upon other grounds. To be seen in such a relation to the one widow, after seeking *such* a relation with the other! As the poor captain meditated upon the matter, which he did in a single instant of time, his face streamed with perspiration, though the month of March, when the event happened, is considered a tolerably cool one, even in a Carolina climate.

Porgy hardly dared encounter the eye of the widow Eveleigh, who had alighted with her son, and now entered. But he strove to pluck up courage, and, in seeking to appear lively, he simply showed himself nervous. When he did catch the eyes of the widow, he saw them filled with a significantly smiling speech, which added to his confusion. She gave him her hand, however, very frankly observing, as she did so—

"What, in our times, Hercules subdued to the distaff!"

"Ah! my dear widow, it is only woman that finds the hero weak. That *you* should have seen me at this folly!"

This was said in something of a whisper.

"Do not count it folly," answered the widow. "It is through the weaknesses of the man that we known his proper strength. That one is able to forget his dignities, only shows that his heart has not been forgotten. But, truth to speak, my dear captain, the picture was an amusing one."

"Funny! very! It must have been." This was said with a ludicrous attempt to smile, which resulted in a grin. Porgy's plan of courtship was exploded for that day, and for a goodly week afterward. But the purpose was not abandoned.

It was about ten days after, when the captain took occasion to revisit the widow Griffin. Frampton and his wife were still absent. Millhouse, Arthur Eveleigh, and George Dennison, were off on a deer hunt somewhere down the river; and Porgy having smoked his after-dinner pipe, and feeling dull, if not drowsy, having dined alone, resolved briefly the desolateness of his state, and, under a sudden call to change it, ordered his horse, determined to woo the widow Griffin after the most lion-like fashion. To confess another of our captain's weaknesses, he had but little doubt of success in his present quest. Griffin had been so docile, so gentle, so solicitous of his ease and comfort, that he really persuaded himself he had but to seek to secure. And so he rode.

A pretty smart canter soon brought him to her door, where the spectacle that confounded him was even more astonishing to his sight, than the situation could have been to the widow Eveleigh, when she caught himself. He could scarce belief his eyes. There, in the piazza, stood the fair Griffin, clasped close in the arms of the overseer, Fordham, and that audacious personage was actually engaged in tasting of her lips, as a sort of dessert after dinner. The situation was apparent as the noonday sun. The facts were beyond all question or denial. The parties were fairly caught, and so conscious was the wicked widow of the sinfulness of suffering herself to be caught, that, not able to face the captain, she broke away from the arms of Fordham, and

rushed headlong into the house. Porgy was swallowed up in astonishment. He was about to wheel his horse around, and ride off, at greater speed than that which brought him, when Fordham sallied out, and asked him to alight, and with the coolest manner in the world said—

"Well, cappin, you've caught us at it; but no harm done, I hope. The widow and me hev' struck hands on a bargain, and I reckon we'll be mighty soon man and wife; and I hope, cappin, to see you at the wedding."

"The d—l you do!" was the only response of the captain, as, looking fiercely indignant at such cold-blooded audacity, he wheeled his horse, clapped spurs to his sides, and sent him homeward at full gallop.

"Mighty strange!" quoth Fordham. "The cappin doesn't seem to like it!"

Simple-minded Fordham, to suppose that a man should like to see his neighbor feeding on the very fruit he had thought to gather for himself.

With the defeat of these attempts, Captain Porgy gave up all notion of marriage.

"Woman!" quoth he, "woman!" and there his soliloquy ended; but the one word, repeated, was full of significance. When at length his comrades were again assembled about the board, and the cheerful fires were blazing on the hearth, and the philosophic cloud wreaths floated about the apartment, and the tankards were filled with potent floods of sunny liquor, Porgy said suddenly to his companions—

"My good fellows, there have been moments when I thought of deserting you,—that is, I sometimes meditated bringing in upon you a fearful influence, which might have lessened your happiness, and destroyed the harmony which prevails among us. I have had various notions of taking a wife—"

"A wife!" cried Dennison. "Oh! hush, captain, and don't frighten a body so! A wife! What madness prompted such a thought?"

"A wife!" cried Oakenburg,—"the Lord deliver us!"

"Ef she'd ha' come, she'd ha' delivered you mighty soon,' quoth Millhouse; "I don't see what's to skear a body in a wife, pervided she's in proper sarcumstances, and is kept strik, by a man usen to army rigilations."

"Maussa better widout 'em," quoth Tom; "I nebber kin 'tan for be happy in house whar woman's is de maussa."

"Well, you will all be pleased to hear, then, that I have determined to live a bachelor for your sakes. I sacrifice my happiness for your own. I renounce the temptations of the flesh. It has been a pang to me, gentlemen, to do so for beauty is precious in my sight. There are women whom I could love. There are charms which persuade my very eyes to sin. There are sweets which make my mouth water. But, for your sakes, I renounce them all. I shall life for you only. You could not well do without me; I will not suffer myself to do without you. You shall be mine always—I shall be yours. To woman, except as friend or companion, I say depart! I renounce ye! Avoid, ye sweet tempters to mortal weakness—ye beguile me with your charms no more! For your sakes, dear comrades, there shall be no mistress, while I live, at Glen-Eberley."

"And may you live for ever!" was the cry from all but Mill house. He only muttered in the ears of Dennison—

"I sees it all! He disowns the women bekaise he kaint help himself. The grapes is sour!"

THE END.

THE
FORAYERS

THE

FORAYERS

OR

THE RAID OF THE DOG-DAYS

By W. GILMORE SIMMS, Esq.

AUTHOR OF "THE PARTISAN"—"MELLICHAMPE"—"KATHARINE WALTON"—"THE SCOUT"—"WOODCRAFT"—"THE YEMASSEE"—"GUY RIVERS." ETC.

Dower. Hark, how our steeds for present service neigh!
Dauphin. Mount them, and make incision in their hides.
That their hot blood may spin in English eyes,
And daunt them with superfluous courage.

King Henry the Fifth.

New York:
A. C. ARMSTRONG & SON,
714 BROADWAY.
1882.

329.333

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855,
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TO

GEN. D. F. JAMISON,

OF ORANGEBURG, S. C.

My Dear Jamison—

You will find, in the tale which follows, that I have borrowed freely from your notes. It is but proper that I should make this acknowledgment, while paying my tribute to your worth, your friendship, and the grateful intimacy which has so long existed between us.

Ever faithfully yours, &c.

W. Gilmore Simms.

Woodlands, S. C.
June 10, 1855.

INTRODUCTION.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

The reader who has done me the honor to keep progress with me in the several journeys which I have made into the somewhat obscure regions of our historical romance—who has, in brief, read my novels, the "Partisan," "Mellichampe," "Katharine Walton," and "The Scout," will remember that I have endeavored to maintain a proper historical connection among these stories, corresponding with the several transitional periods of the Revolutionary war in South Carolina. While the "Partisan" opened the drama with the fall of Charleston, the "Scout" closed with the siege of "Ninety-Six;" an event which, though it left the victory in the hands of the British, left them, at the same time, in a condition of such feebleness, as to render their temporary triumph of little value to their fortunes. The post was abandoned as soon as rescued from the besiegers, and Lord Rawdon, apprehensive of dangers which were sufficiently apparent upon the horizon to every veteran eye, took up his line of march, with all possible expedition, for the Low Country, and the securities of the seaboard.

The "Partisan" closed with the melancholy defeat of the first southern continental army under Gates, at Camden. "Mellichampe" illustrated the interval between this event and the arrival of Greene, with the rude material for the organization of a second army; and was more particularly intended to do honor to the resolute and hardy patriotism of the scattered bands of patriots, who still maintained a predatory warfare against the foe among the swamps and thickets, rather keeping alive the spirit of the country, than operating decisively for its rescue. "The Scout," originally published under the name of "The Kinsmen," occupied a third period, when the wary policy of Greene began to make itself felt, in the gradual isolation and overthrow of the detached posts and fortresses which the enemy had established with the view to overawe the people in the leading precincts of the state; while "Katharine Walton," closing the career of certain parties, introduced to the reader by the "Partisan," and making complete the trilogy begun in that work, was designed to show the fluctuations of the contest, the spirit with which it was carried on, and to embody certain events of great individual interest, connected with the fortunes of persons not less distinguished by their individual worth of character, and their influence upon the general history, than by the romantic circumstances growing out of their career.

This narrative brought down the record to a period, when, for the first time, the British were made to understand that the conflict was doubtful; that their conquests were insecure, and that, so far from extending their arms over the interior, it became a question with them whether they should be able to maintain their hold upon the strong places of which they had so long held possession. Their country-posts had mostly fallen into the hands of the partisans, and such as remained were momently threatened with like fortune. To maintain themselves in Charleston and Savannah, the necessity was pressing that they should contract their powers, and concentrate their forces.

Reinforcements from Europe were hardly to be expected. The British empire was in a state of exhaustion, and the army of the invader was now half made up of the provincial loyalists.

It is proposed, in the present story, to resume the historical narrative at this period; making it subordinate, however—as has been the plan of the preceding volumes—to other events, in which the writer will naturally seek to illustrate the social condition of the country, under the influence of those strifes and trials which give vivacity to ordinary circumstances, and mark with deeper hues, and stronger colors, and sterner tones, the otherwise common progress of human hopes and fears, passions and necessities.

The operations of the British in South Carolina, after the abandonment of Ninety-Six, were contracted almost entirely within that section of country, which is enclosed by the Santee, the Congaree, and Edisto rivers. They were wholly concentrated in the alluvial regions, or what is called the Low Country. Here, Rawdon proposed to keep his forces in hand, ready for emergencies, and hoped, undertaking no enterprises, to make a sufficient stand against the American troops. But, even for this, it was soon found that his strength was inadequate, and that Greene was confident enough to offer him battle on the Edisto. With a melancholy instinct, warning him of humiliating reverses, Lord Rawdon anticipated the mortification of final defeat, by yielding the command of the army to Colonel Stewart, retiring himself, after a brief pause at Orangeburg, to the walls of Charleston, where, he lingered only long enough to stain his good name by the sanguinary execution of Hayne, and then departed for Europe.

One single farther statement will suffice to put the reader in possession of the relative position of the opposing forces. The numerical strength of Greene and Stewart was nearly equal. Apart from the garrison at Charleston, and a detachment under Colonel Cruger, slowly approaching from above, the army of

Colonel Stewart may have numbered from fifteen hundred to two thousand men; that of Greene was fully the latter number, but mostly composed of militia. But, though Greene lacked in regular infantry, he was more than a match for his opponent in cavalry. In this respect, he was well served. There was no better cavalry in the world, and it grew more numerous every day, by accessions from the country gentry.

It will be seen from this statement, that Greene, though not unwilling to fight, was yet in no condition to invite the combat except on his own terms. For this, Rawdon and Stewart were equally unwilling. Strongly posted as they were in Orangeburg, it would have been madness in Greene to have forced the trial of strength upon them, and Stewart, left suddenly in command, felt too heavily the weight of responsibility upon him, to undertake any bold adventure. There were reasons for his forbearance, other than his own sense of responsibility, which sufficiently excused his apathy. But these reasons will properly find development in the course of our story. It is then understood that our narrative opens at the moment when Rawdon is preparing to yield the care of the army to the charge of his lieutenant, at the moment when, approaching Orangeburg as a post of rest, after the retreat from Ninety-Six, after the abandonment and destruction of Camden, after the loss of almost all of their posts in the interior, the British, after an exhausting march, weary and desponding, are seeking to snatch a momentary rest from fatigue and danger — not willing to seek their foes, and scarcely able to cover themselves from pursuit. They were soon to be strengthened by a body of thirteen hundred men, chiefly loyalists, under the command of Cruger, late commandant at the post of Ninety-Six; but of his approach, as yet, they knew but little, and had every reason to apprehend that he might be cut off, burdened as was his train by clouds of fugitive tories, with their families, from the upper country, and followed closely by Pickens, one of the most famous partisans of Carolina.

Nothing, indeed, saved them but the exhausted condition of Pickens's cavalry, which, to use his own language, "could neither get up with the enemy, nor get away from him." To excuse the lack of enterprise in both armies, it is only necessary to add that hunger and nakedness were at work among them. Provisions could not be procured on any terms. The country was exhausted; and very cheerfully would both parties have taken the field for food, when they would have hesitated to do so for more noble considerations.

But we may safely leave it to the novelist to pursue the narrative in place of the historian. Enough has been shown of the chronicle to place the reader in full possession of the relative strength and condition of the contending forces. The Americans are gaining confidence with every moment of pause; the British, gathering themselves up for the last struggle, prior to their expulsion from a region, of which, for a long season, they had enjoyed the pleasant fruits. Suspense, anxiety and apprehension, like so many heavy clouds, to say nothing of a long and scorching summer, hung over the fortunes of the contending armies, and seemed to paralyze their energies.

But the partisans have their work to do in spite of these discouraging influences. They were allowed no such respite as was accorded to the regular army, and throughout the whole exhausting period of summer, their cavalry was kept in motion startling the British with incessant alarms; hovering about their posts, snatching up their convoys, and occasionally cutting off their detachments. In this sort of work, we find all our great captains of partisans equally engaged, Marion, Sumter, Pickens, Lee, Maham, Harden, the two Hamptons, Horry, Taylor, and many others. By these, even under the blazing heats of July and August, the country was literally swept, as with a fiery besom, through all that region the boundaries of which have already been described. This was the famous campaign of "The Dog-Days," a season proverbial for the wonderful endu-

rance and audacity of the partisans, when the regular troops of neither army could make a day's march, without the loss of numbers perishing from the heat. In the retreat of Rawdon from Ninety-Six, more than fifty soldiers dropped dead upon the march; and subsequently — but we must not anticipate. We have already trespassed somewhat, in these slight glances at the province which we propose to assign to our story.

THE FORAYERS.

CHAPTER I.

'BRAM'S CABIN IN THE SWAMP.

The district of Orangeburg, in South Carolina, constitutes one of the *second tier* (from the seaboard) of the political and judicial divisions or districts of that state. It is a vast plain, with a surface almost unbroken, in the southern and western portions, by elevations of any sort. In this region, it is irrigated by numerous watercourses, rivers, and creeks, that make their way through swamps of more or less width and density. These are all thickly covered with a wild and tangled forest-growth, skirted with great pines, and dwarf-oaks, to say nothing of a vast variety of shrub-trees; the foliage of which, massed together by gadding vines, usually presents, in mid-summer, the appearance of a solid wall, impervious to sight and footstep.

The precinct received its first European settlers in 1704. These, originally the subjects of the prince of Orange, naturally conferred his name upon the district. But the settlements were not confined to this people. Along the Santee, the Congaree, and Edisto, there were Huguenot and English families, that came in afterward; and, occasionally, a small group of Scotch, and protestant Irish, might be found, occupying tracts which were comparatively isolated from all others.

These several settlements maintained each its original national characteristics; and, even at the opening of the Revolution, there had been little or no amalgamation among them. They

did not even associate; and the only cementing agency which they acknowledged, bringing the several parties into social relation, grew gradually, in the growth of a native population. The children of all parties spoke the English language, and this proved a bond of union, in the absence of other ties, of a strength sufficient to neutralize, in a great degree, the original antipathies of the parent stocks.

Near the creeks and rivers, the settlements were, naturally, most numerous; and, speaking with regard to the standard acknowledged among the people, these watercourses were comparatively thickly inhabited. Along the Santee, for example, and the two great lines of thoroughfare from Charleston to the Congarees, the sound of a horn, in times of danger, could bring out, almost anywhere, a score of mounted men; though we need scarcely inform our readers, in respect to a region so lacking in homogeneity — during the revolutionary period — that the same means would be just as apt to find them divided very equally into opposing parties. The French, or Huguenot settlements, would be sure to wear whig colors; so also the Irish; the Scotch and English were mostly dogged loyalists; while the German population were nearly equally divided in sentiment between the colony and the crown.

Of the native born, a vast majority were patriots, particularly the younger men; and these, necessarily brought together from all the settlements, blended the otherwise adverse national sentiments of the original stocks, into that rare sort of union, which Anacreon Moore rather fancifully describes as the "one arch of peace." To this mingling of their young, was due, in some degree, the occasional forbearance of the parents; many of whom, on both sides, took parole or protection, and forebore the field; as much because of the committal of their sons, as because of any selfish apprehensions of their own.

There was still a fair proportion, however, who felt, or acknowledged, none of these restraints; and who, whether from a natural and earnest sentiment of loyalty, or because of their full faith in the powers of the German sovereign on the throne of Britain, to coerce his rebellious subjects into obedience, joined the banner of the king as soon as it was unfurled, and proved themselves as fierce and unsparing, as if they dealt only

with their natural enemies. It is not our purpose here to indicate the various causes which led the people to choose opposition on either side; but, we may add, that, as in all such cases, there were baser motives also at work; there were private feuds to avenge, hot rivalries to assuage, and plunder to be won. It may be that the progress of our history will unfold all of these motives in turn.

There is a small watercourse, buried in swamp and thickly fringed with a natural and noble forest-growth, which, rising at nearly equal distances between the Santee and the Edisto, finds its way at last into the latter river. This stream goes still by the old rustic title of the Four-Holes swamp. In the times of which we write, it was one of the places of refuge for the outlying patriot. The settlements along its upland margin were infrequent; and, though skirted by one of the common thoroughfares of the county, the region was of too suspicious a character to suffer the traveller to linger as he rode. There was nothing to woo the lover of the picturesque in the prospect around him, and curiosity had but little motive to pierce the dark and silent recesses of those thickets which seemed impenetrable from without; and the mysterious stillness and obscurity of which, were well calculated to arm the instincts of the wayfarer with a tremulous sense of danger. He rarely suffered himself or his steed to pause and bait as he sped over the route, so long as the gloomy shadows of this great thicket were cast upon his path.

It is to this very region, however, that we propose to conduct the reader now. We shall penetrate the silent and shadowy fortress of swamp and forest, following a footpath which you would scarcely discover for yourself; the traces of which, from without, are quite undiscernible by the uninitiated. We enter a creek, breaking boldly through a fence of willows. Our steeds leave no track in the water. We follow the stream for fifty yards, and knee-deep in the swamp we are surrounded by a wood of cypresses. Before us another fortress of forest spreads away, thick and matted. We press boldly up against it, and a faint gleam of light appears, as shining through a crevice, on our left. We descend, following this gleam. It opens sufficiently to admit of our passage through a copse of cane and

willows over which hang great branches of gum and tupola We pass a hammock, thickly covered with woods. And still our way lies through water. The path grows sinuous and would be lost, but for certain marks upon the branches of the trees under which we are required to move. *You* would not see these marks. No one could see them, were they not shown; or decipher their mystic uses, were they not explained. They have been carefully made, not only to escape the casual glance, but to shape, step by step, the course of him who has been taught the cipher. The refuge has been often sought. It has hitherto justified the hope of security which it promised. The spot was long known and honored after the Revolution, as "'Bram Johnson's Castle."

But we have not reached "'Bram's Castle" yet. There is still a tract of wood and water to be passed. The refuge is one designedly difficult of access, and even to him who knows the indices by which to find it, the way is circuitous and the paths difficult. But we will suppose these to be overcome. The region has been laid bare since the war, and many have been the curious spectators whom the familiar scout has conducted to the curious hiding-place of the patriots. Let us penetrate at once to the recess, supposing the difficult progress to be overcome, and emerging suddenly from the thicket and swamp, upon a hammock, an islet of the swamp, covered with mighty trees, pine and beech, a sandy spot, high, dry, and sheltered, as if a retreat for the *Genius Loci*, whom we will suppose a bearded Druid, brooding in silence while he grows to stone, and the gray moss winds about him, a natural shroud for the High Priest of a perished people.

It was on the afternoon of one of the hottest days of June—one of the hottest months in Carolina—in the year of grace one thousand seven hundred and eighty-one, that a horseman made his way along the route described, and penetrated to the little swamp islet, or hammock, upon which the cabin of 'Bram Johnson stood. The stranger was very certainly a military man, though it would be difficult to describe his costume as a military uniform. He evidently belonged to the irregular service. His clothes were of a dark blue, and consisted of an overall, or hunting shirt of linen or cotton material. His small

clothes were of the same material, and leggins, of blue also, much after the Indian fashion, completed his outfit. The cap which he wore was of common fur, without feather. He carried a broadsword at his side, and pistols, doubly shotted, filled his holsters. His steed was a glorious black, without spot upon all his body, one white star excepted, which was conspicuous upon his right fore shoulder. The rider was of vigorous build, not so heavy as compact and symmetrical; some five feet eleven inches high, erect of carriage, and probably twenty-seven years of age. He had a finely-formed oval face, well bronzed, cheeks full, chin prominent, and eyes gray and searching as the eagle's. The forehead was broad, the head high, and the chestnut curls escaped beneath his cap, and hung loose and long upon his shoulder. Clearly, there was need for shears and razor, the beard being quite as long and massive as the hair.

Our horseman had penetrated all the avenues leading to the hammock of 'Bram Johnson, without disturbing any echoes. He stopped his steed when about to emerge upon the banks, and alighted where he stood, fastening the animal to a swinging bough that hung above the creek. With his sabre in his hand the rider quietly ascended the hammock, and made his way forward, with the stride of one quite sure of his ground, and without apprehending interruption. He was clearly one of those in possession of the "*open sesame*." He passed quietly but confidently among the great beeches, cypresses, and sycamores, which covered the islet, until his eye caught glimpses of a vein of smoke that rose from the cabin of 'Bram Johnson. Then he paused for a moment, and, stealing from tree to tree, as if suddenly counselled with the necessity of caution, he continued to press forward, in this stealthy manner, until the wigwam of the negro stood full in sight before him.

It was a very sultry afternoon, as we have said, on one of the hottest days in our hottest month. The present season was, if possible, far hotter than usual; and, in that dense empire of shrub and forest, where the winds could at no time penetrate with vigour — where they could not course or sweep, but only trickle, as it were — the atmosphere weighed like a coppery fluid upon the universal nature. The stranger had sensibly

felt its pressure, and his movements had been slow accordingly. The perspiration streamed from his brows, and the blood throbbed violently in the veins upon his forehead. But the sight that met his eyes seemed to make him forgetful of his own exhaustion. A smile curled his lips, and rested upon his noble features, like a soft sunset upon a happy landscape. It was evident that his was a lively nature, keenly susceptible of the playful and the humorous. He paused, and the words rose to his lips, as if spoken in the ears of a companion.

"Now, look at that rascally negro. There he sits, drowsing in the sunset, mouth wide, and every sense steeped in forgetfulness. An alligator might take him as he sleeps, and make his first mouthful of him before he could open his eyes. Yet is he set to watch and wait. He has gorged himself with terrapin and rice. He has probably had a fat possum for dinner; or, possibly, has contrived to pick up some luckless pig, straying out of hearing of Holman's stye. He, at all events, will contrive to feed and fatten though his master starves."

Thus saying, the stranger quietly drawing his sabre, smote a hickory shoot from a neighboring tree, and thus armed he approached the sleeping negro. 'Bram [Abram] was a portly fellow, loosely clad, a white homespun shirt and duck trowsers constituting his only covering. The shirt was open at the breast, displaying a broad massive trunk, like that of Hercules. The sweat rolled down from his face and neck, or stood out upon his skin in big bead-like drops that glistened like oil. His deep breathing was like that of a young cayman, crying for his supper. Never was being more happily unconscious of what the morrow was to bring forth. A smart stroke of the hickory over his shoulders suddenly enlightened him. A second brought him to his feet, and fairly opened his eyes. Rubbing his irritated shoulder with one hand, while he threw out the other in defence, he cried—

"Wha' de debbil dat! who dat, I say, da hit massa nigger wid hick'ry?"

The stroke was repeated, and the fellow opened his eyes this time to a full knowledge of the person in whose presence he stood.

"Ki! Mass Willie, da you?"

"And this is the way, you rascal, that you watch the camp when I am gone?"

"Psho, maussa, I bin see you all de time! I know he bin you from de fuss [first]."

"Then you must have a famous passion for hickory, you rascal, to receive three cuts of it before letting me know that you were awake."

"Psho! de hick'ry aint hutt [hurt]."

"Ah! will you try a little more of it?" But the black retreated, rubbing his shoulders afresh.

"Tank you, Mass Willie; but 'scuse me, ef you please; no more dis time. Next time, maybe, I will tank you for anoder tas'e [taste]."

"You will get more than a taste, 'Bram, if I catch you another time, sleeping in broad daylight, when your business was to keep close watch until Ballou came in. Suppose the tories had found you out?"

"Oh! maussa, he bin so hot dis ebning, and I jis bin loss myself wid sleep when you bin coming. I no bin quite 'sleep neider, for I t'ink I bin yerry de hoss, and t'ink I bin see somebody cross my eye jis when you come up on de hammock. I don't t'ink I bin loss myse'f 'tall."

"Shut up, and don't lie to me, 'Bram! But this sort of watching will never do! Suppose it had been one of Carmichael's tories instead of me?"

"How tory guine fin' he way yer, Mass Willie?"

"How did we find our way here?"

"Oh, we berry differen' sort of people, maussa. We hab sense, maussa. More dan dat, enty I know dem tory is all gone up de country wid de red coats."

"But they are coming back as fast as possible, and some of them will no doubt arrive in Orangeburg to-night or to-morrow."

"Ki! you say so, maussa?"

"Yes, indeed, you rascal; and if this is the way that you watch when you are sent out, we shall have a round chance of being taken,—every mother's son of us, by Coffin's cavalry, or Fisher's scouting parties."

"Wha' de use for you talk so, Mass Willie, when you knows its onpossible. How dem poor little carrion hoss of Coffin guine

run we down? How dem dutty [dirty] nigger of Fisher guine fin' we out? Enty I know he can't come it, try he bes'; as for dem cabalry of Coffin, he gone up t'ree week ago. I shum [see um] when he pass t'rough Orangebu'g. He bin down, some of dem, to young missis place, and bring off heap of corn and fodder. I speck Pete Blodgit will tell you all 'bout it when you axes um; dat is, if he aint too big a rascal; and I'm jubous 'bout he rascality—dat same Pete."

"What do you know about it, 'Bram?"

"He *sell* de cawn and fodder, maussa, to de redcoat. He git de money for 'em."

"I know that already. But did you learn how much he sold?"

"I bin watch close. He sell heap. De redcoat feed dere t'ree days; den he carry off t'ree, sebben, five, eleben wagon loads of cawn and fodder—all up to Orangebu'g."

"No, nonsense, 'Bram. I know you don't love Pete Blodgit, but that's no reason why you should lie about him. How many wagon-loads were carried off?"

"I speck he hab seben or eleben, maussa, da's a trute."

"Seven—or eleven!"

"Yes; de cawn bin at de bottom, de fodder on top. I can't tell how much, but Pete get money for 'em. I see de goul'in he hand, more dan I kin count."

"That, too, I know; but can you guess how much?"

"He hab he han' *full*—more dan full! I see dat! But I can't count 'em, whay I bin hide!"

"Where did you hide to see all this?"

"Bury up in de fodder in de loff [loft]. I lay down wid my mouth 'pon hole in de floor, an' I bin look t'rough de floor 'pon Pete Blodgit and the o'd'ly sargen' where him an' Pete bin down in the stable. He git he han' full of goul'guinies; dat I know; and he hab han', maussa—you ebber bin obzarb Pete Blodgit han', maussa!—he hab hand like shubble [shovel]!"

"I believe you are right, 'Bram, about the measure of his hands, but—"

"To be sure, I right! He heb em like shubble, for true; and he kin shet he han' on wha' he git, maussa, I tell you. Ha! dat Pete Blodgit, maussa;—keep you eye 'pon 'em! You guine fin' 'em out yit, some day He's a most dutty rascal."

"Hush, 'Bram: no more of that. I will keep my eye upon both of you. And now, what of Ballou? Has he been drinking again?"

"He guine ebber lef' off drink, maussa, so long as Jimmaker run? Jim Ballou *mus'* drink if he hab Jimmaker. He soak all day las' Sunday."

"Was he sober the day when he went off?"

"I speek so; but dere's no telling, maussa. He so usen to drink, dat, drunk or sober, he hab he leg always."

"You were down at Holly-Dale, 'Bram, and saw Henry."

"Nebber see Mass Henry; he bin gone somewhar'. See Miss Bertha. He [she] ax 'bout you, maussa! Ha! You bin look 'pon em when he ax 'bout you, wid he eye look down, and de red kibber [cover] all he face, you feel warm all 'bout de heart. He's a most beautiful gal child, is Miss Bert'a."

"Did you see the old gentleman?"

"Wha'! de cappin? Enty he cuss me, for d—n bull-head son ob a buffalo! Look yer, Mass Willie, keep you eye shary 'pon dat same ole Cappin Trabis. He hab heep o' dealing wid dem tory in de Fork. He eat dinner wid dem redcoat in de garrison at Orangebu'g. He git British guineas and high price for ebbry t'ing he kin sell in Orangebu'g. You t'ink he hab good feeling for you, Mass Willie, cause you fadder and him bin togedder in de ole Cherokee war!—you t'ink he look kin' 'pon you when you gone to see Miss Bert'a? nebber blieb em! He's no better, I tell you, dan a d—n tory."

"Silence, sir. No more of this."

"I can't silence, maussa! Look you, enty I look 'pon em, arm in arm, walking de piazza wid dat Dick Inglehardt. You know Dick Inglehardt. Enty he tory to de backbone? Well, you know wha' he go for when he gone to Holly-Dale?"

The negro watched the effect of his information upon his master's visage. He did not deceive himself in the conjecture that what he said would make the other look grave. With a subdued voice, the master inquired:—

"Was Richard Inglehardt at Holly-Dale when you were there the other day?"

"To be show [sure] he bin day! Big as a ginoral, walking up and down de piazza, as who but he!"

"Did he see *you*, 'Bram?"

"Catch me at dat, Mass Willie! Oh! no, when I shum, I back into de bush. I knew bery well, ef he see 'Bram, he say to hesef—'Bram maussa no far off. He bin day heap o' times lately, I speck. I shum riding out from Orangeburg wid de ole cappin. Bote of dem hab shot in de eye."

"What! drunk?"

"Jis' dat, and not'ing else; but 'twas arter dinner, Maussa close on to sundown, and when a genpleman has a sawt o' right, you know, to onsettle his standing wid a sawt o' sentiment."

"You are getting equally elegant in your modes of thought and speech, Abram; and if you would only drop your habit of swearing, there's no telling the degree of elegance to which you might arrive. But let us look into your cabin. I want my homespun."

"Wha'! you guine a 'sguising yourself agin, Mass Willie. I speck you guine right off now to Hollydale. You mus' look sharp 'bout you ef you guine dere."

"No matter where I go, 'Bram; it is not exactly my cue to let you know all my movements."

"Ha! you better! you better tek [take] me wid you. You git in trouble some day, when 'Bram aint close by to help you out o' de ditch. Dem tory will sure for fin' you out, some day, t'rough all dat 'sguising; and taint yaller homspun, and coon-skin cap, and bushy wig and whisker wha' guine hide you from 'em, when you stan' up so straight in your mocksens, and show sich leg as dat t'rough your leggins."

"You are a cunning rascal, 'Bram," replied the other with a smile, laying his hand upon the negro's shoulder kindly as he spoke, while the latter applied his key to the padlock. The door of the cabin was open, and the two went in together.

When, after a space, the master reappeared from the cabin, he was completely disguised in the rude, simple garments of the poorest sort of countrymen. He had, besides, taken the precaution to stain his face and hands, with a thin decoction of some native roots from the woods, so that the fair white and red of his complexion were hidden in a gipsy sort of bronze, which, to any but a very close examination, would seem natural enough.

We do not care to report the further dialogue between the parties. It will not concern our narrative. The master extended his hand.

"And now, 'Bram, I must leave you. I must ride to Pete Blodgit's to-night. Take care of yourself, and do not leave the cabin on any account till Ballou returns. One or other of you must be here always. I have dropped a letter in the hollow for Colonel Singleton. Should he come while you are here, or any of his officers, say to him, or them, that the Great Buffalo means to lie down for awhile, and rest upon the hills."

"De high hills, Mass Willie."

"Ay, ay, the high hills of Santee; and say further, that the Gamecock wants them to hear his crow, and join him for a great flight below."

"I comperhends, maussa. I knows. De Gamecock—"

"I only wish you to repeat what I say, 'Bram; it is not necessary that you should comprehend it. If you have one fault, 'Bram, more than another, which I could wish you to correct, it is that of being a little too wise for your master."

"Oh! psho, Mass Willie. Git out! Don't be a poking fun wid a sharp finger at you nigger. But, one ting, Mass Willie. I yer say day hab mak' you promoted. You's a ginneral now, or somet'ing or udder like it."

"Only a major, 'Bram; only a major!"

"But dat's de nex' ting, or mighty close on to a ginneral, I'm a t'inking."

"Good-bye, 'Bram!"—offering his hand.

"God bless you, Mass Willie; God for ebber bless you, and sen' you safe, wid a warm spur, trough de berry camp ob de enemy."

"The prayer may be more reasonable than you dream of, old fellow. Good-bye, 'Bram."

He shook the negro's hand affectionately and departed as he came. 'Bram followed him to the edge of the hammock, and when he had gone from sight—buried in the thick woods in front—and when his horse's tread could be heard no longer, the faithful slave murmured, with half a sigh, a tear glistening in his eye as he turned back to his cabin:—

"God bress he heart! God bress he heart! I lub 'em like

my own chile. But I always fear'd when I shum go off widout 'Bram. I knows wha' he is, for running he hoss 'mong dem tory. He aint fear'd of dem tory no more dan I fear'd of grasshopper. Le' [let] any of dem speak to him wid sassy tongue, and how he will smash he teet'. Ha! I 'member dat scrimmage by M'Code ferry; den de one down by Lenud's; den up ag'in in Lynch's; I yer de ole Gamecock say, hese'f, dat Willie Sinclair is all h–ll for a charge! I so wish I bin wid em."

But we will leave the slave to his meditations, while we follow the footsteps of his master, whose present occupation, we may whisper in the reader's ear, contemplates equally his own and the affairs of the partisan cavalry under the command of Marion.

CHAPTER II.

WHELP AND DAM.

Our people are hard riders, and a night canter through the forest is no held to be a very perilous or unpleasant neccssity. It was with no concern that our horseman found the night settling down upon him as soon as he left the swamp. Nor did it occasion much concern that the darkness was coming on in cloud, and with a threat of storm. He looked up at the gloomy masses gathering in the south, without disquiet; and very slightly increased the speed of his charger by a slight shake of the bridle in his grasp.

We need not describe his ride, which was continued for some hours, his steed being allowed to vary his paces at times, and to subside finally, from a canter, into a good travelling trot.

His course lay across the country in the direction of the Santee. By nine o'clock he reached a ruined homestead—a tolerably ancient manor seat—where, by daylight, the traveller might readily perceive the proofs of former state and wealth. A great entrance, or carriage-way, of brick columns, still remained, opening upon a noble avenue of oaks. But the fences and gates were gone. Our horseman penetrated the avenue, which conducted to the site of what had been a noble mansion. It was now in ruins. The flames had done their work fully upon the edifice, which had been built of black cypress, upon a foundation of brick, raised some ten feet above the ground. The foundation and the chimneys alone remained. The ruin had been the work of tory hands, one of the thousand proofs, which the country everywhere afforded, of the terrible civil war which had now, for some years, prevailed in Carolina.

Our traveller sighed unconsciously as he passed the ruins which he could but imperfectly discern in the dim light of a few melancholy stars which shone out still among the imper-

fect cloud-drifts. His memory fully recalled the bitter pang which followed his first knowledge of the fate of the ancient homestead. The tall chimneys stood up against the sky, in the open area, like so many gloomy memorials of a tragic history—silent, but full of speech to his affections. But he rode on without pausing; his pace, indeed, a little accelerated, as if he aimed to lose the sight of objects which only brought him troubling thoughts. He passed through a ravaged garden in the rear; entered a wood which had been a pretty sylvan haunt of his youth; in the recesses of which he suddenly came upon a log-house, through the chinks of which a faint light now reached his eyes.

As he beheld it through the trees, he drew up his steed, alighted, and having fastened the reins to the first shrub-tree, he stole cautiously to the cottage entrance, and peeped silently through one of its several crevices. As if satisfied, by his survey, that he might proceed more boldly, he smote the door thrice with his sabre hilt. His voice seconded this application, and, after a brief delay, in which he exhibited more impatience than at any time during his whole ride, the door was opened to him. He had reached the place of shelter not a moment too soon. Big drops of rain were now beginning to ooze out from the trailing clouds above.

The salutation of the cottager—who came to the door in a partial undress, and bearing in his hand an inch of tallow candle, "*dipt*," such as the poorer sort of people commonly used whenever they were ambitious beyond the light-wood torch—would seem to show that the new-comer had been expected.

"Well, major, I had a'most given you up. It's pretty late, I reckon. I'd a sort o' guess that you'd 'a been here last night; and I sot up for you till the biggest part of the night was gone. And when you didn't come, all day, I was jubous something had happened. All's well, I reckon?"

"Quite, Blodgit; quite as well as it can be at present. Still, we may hope that it may be better. But of this hereafter. Now, my good fellow, let us find a cover for my horse. How's the corn and fodder?"

"Oh! enough, sir, and to spare a friend."

"And an enemy, too, upon occasion, Blodgit."

"How, sir,—an inimy!"

"Love your enemies, you know!"

"Oh! yes, sir; that's true; that's in the good book, but 'taint quite the law 'mong sodgers, I'm thinking. Sodgers, Major—"

"No matter now, about the soldiers, Blodgit; let us see to the horse." And the stranger moved from the cabin to where the beast was fastened.

"Never you mind him, major. *I'll* see to him."

"Thank you, Blodgit, but I prefer to see to him myself. My good 'Nimrod' might reasonably be displeased with me if I left him to the care of anybody but myself. Besides, it's a habit with me now, and I should not eat my own supper, or enjoy my own sleep, with any satisfaction, if I did not first see that he was put properly in the way for getting his. Do you lead the way to the stables, and shake down some fodder. No more words about it."

The words of the speaker, uttered with the air of one accustomed to command, were decisive, and the two proceeded together to the stables, which were pretty well shrouded in the wood, some hundred yards in the rear of the cabin. Here, the traveller stripped the animal of his furniture, and, in spite of Blodgit's urgent offers of service, rubbed him down himself.

"It's no wonder, major, that the beast loves you, and you're sich a horseman as you are. It stands to reason that he should love you, when you take sich care of him."

"Tumble in the fodder, Blodgit."

The latter obeyed. This done, the horseman added:—

"We will let him munch on that for a while. In half an hour, he must have thirty ears of corn. And now, a word in your ear, Blodgit. Having seen to the horse, look a little to his master, who, I can answer for it, has not had a bite since sunrise."

"You don't say so, major! Come along, sir, and we kin find you some cold bread and bacon. Ef you'd wait for it, we might even run down a chicken."

"Let the chicken run, Blodgit. The bread and bacon will answer every purpose."

They emerged from the stables together, and pushed hurriedly

for the cabin. The rain was now falling steadily. They had scarcely entered the hut and closed the door, when it came down in torrents; while the winds, suddenly rising, roared over the low, shingled roof, with the hoarse rush of the sea upon the shore. The traveller looked up with satisfaction, rubbing his hands as he spoke.

"I am fortunate in having saved my distance. How it pours!"

A woman's voice from an inner room answered his self-congratulation.

"Don't mind the pouring, major, when you're in the dry."

"Ah! old lady, are you still awake?" responded the traveller.

"Yes, indeed, major; old people don't sleep much; pretticklarly when they're troubled with the rheumatiz."

"What! still sick—the old complaint?"

"Well, I'm always a-complaining. Pains in all my bones, pretticklarly in wet weather. I kin hardly git about at all; and that's why I made Pete bring me down from the loft, for I couldn't be going up and down them troublesome steps, you know."

"To be sure—you were right, old lady. In your infirm condition that room is the proper place for you."

"So I told Pete. I'm all over infirmities. I kin do nothing hardly for myself now, and but one little negro gal to help me, and she so contrary. There's no keeping her awake, do and say what I will. You Jenny—Jenny!"

And the old woman began to bawl for the negro, whose snores were audible from the same chamber.

"Don't bother yourself about the gal," cried Blodgit. "What do you want, mammy? Let me do it."

The son, who had been busy spreading the supper-table, now proceeded to the apartment of the old woman.

"The physic bottle, Pete. It's in the cupboard."

"What! you will take physic, old lady?" asked the traveller, still speaking from the hall.

"What kin I do, major? I must take something for these pains, and this is a most famous physic. It cured old Betsy Dollard in three weeks, and she was much worse off than me. She had the rheumatiz, I don't know how many years."

"Well, I hope the stuff may cure you, old lady But I have no faith in physic. It is quite enough to expect, if the patient does not die of it."

"Ah! major, you talk like a young man, as ef you was to be young always. But wait till you git old like me, and then you'll think there's nothing in the world like doctor's stuff."

"Heaven forefend!" exclaimed the traveller. "Commend me to bacon and hominy, egg and chicken, bread and milk—any farmhouse physic in preference to that of the doctor's shop."

The speaker, by this time, was slashing away at the fragment of a flitch, which stood before him.

"Some of this bacon now, Mrs. Blodgit," he cried aloud.

"Ah! ef I dared! But 'twould be the death of me, at night preticklarly."

"The life of you, rather," was the answer; the speaker shaving off a second slice of the meat, and doing prompt execution upon the corn hoecake at the same time.

"Bread and bacon," he continued, "work like magic upon sick people. They have cured more desperate cases in one year, than physic has cured in a century. Bacon is a great medicine by itself. I've known of a hundred cures which it has made, taken internally; nay, the very smell of the meat, when it is warm, has a wonderful effect. There was one poor fellow, I remember, who was left for dead on the field at Blackstocks. We never dreamed of his having breath enough in him to keep a snail alive, and looked to bury him with the rest, as soon as we had finished dinner. But the moment the men began to eat, and the savor of the bacon reached his nostrils, he revived, begged for a morsel only, and has been a well man ever since. I don't know, indeed, but that he owes his escape from all bullets from that day, to the fact that he always feeds fully before he goes into battle. He keeps a thick streak of bacon between ribs and skin, and it turns off the bullets."

"Lord presarve me! Is it possible, major?"

"Possible! It is true, Mrs. Blodgit; and known to every trooper in Sumter's cavalry. The old Gamecock would have a fellow up at the halberds, in short order, who ventured to dispute it. Try a morsel, old lady, and you'll feel your pains the easier for it."

"Ef I thought so, major. But the doctor says—Doctor Blumenburg, you know—that, with my complaint, I should eat a'most nothing."

"And *I* say, that, with your complaint, it would be better were you to swallow Blumenburg himself, than his drugs."

"Oh! majór, how kin you talk so?"

"Does he tell you what your complaint is?"

"No! that's true; he don't!"

"Well, I will! Your complaint is—*physic!*"

"Jest as I said, mother," put in Pete. "It's what I'm always a-telling her. I tells her that it's doctor's stuff and old age, together."

"Old age, Pete Blodgit! I wonder what you knows about it! Old age, indeed! I'm a young woman, major! I'd be young and spry as anybody, if 'twan't for the rheumatiz. Old age! Oh! Pete Blodgit, you're a most onnatural son for one born in a Christian country. Would you b'lieve it, major, but I warn't but a child—a ga'l of sixteen—when that *on*-natural cub was born; and for him to turn upon his mother, just like a heathen Philistine."

"Psho, mother, don't be foolish now!"

"Foolish! You oughtn't to say a word to me, Pete Blodgit, considering you didn't want to let me move my bed down sta'rs, though you know'd well enough how I was suffering up thar' in the loft!"

The son answered surlily:—

"There was no need for you to come down. The room's a good room up in the loft, and down here, you are only in th. way."

"Only in the way! Oh! you sarpent! A good room, you say; and all littered up with kags and boxes."

"Littered! Yes, and who litters them? Tell me that? Tell the major now, ef you hain't got a hen a-setting now in every one of them kags and boxes."

"Jest hear him, the sarpent! Hens must set, major! It's the natur' of hens to set! But jest you ax him, major, ef he hadn't the onnateral heart to say I shouldn't come down sta'rs to be in the way of his company."

"Company?" was the single word, uttered inquiringly by the guest, and he looked at Blodgit as if for explanation.

"You knows I has no company, mother," said the son, with a slight show of confusion, and some little impatience in his tone.

"Yes, you has, Pete; and too much for your own good. What's them men, that kept you a-drinking here, Friday night, for a'most three good hours; and then you went off with them, the Lord knows whar', for, I reckon, good two hours more. You were after no good, I reckon."

"Leaving you alone all that time, old lady?"

"Jest so, major; and me so mighty bad off with the rheumatiz."

"Ah! that rheumatiz! Try the bacon, Mrs. Blodgit. It was the bacon, and not the physic, that cured Mother Dollard. And so, Pete neglects you for his drinking associates; goes off with all sort of scapegraces, I suppose, and leaves you to suffer from your pains."

"That he does, major—"

"I hev' no company—I don't go off with nobody, major—"

"What, man! won't let your mother speak?"

"That's the how, major! He shets me up jest as fast as I open my mouth."

"A sure sign of a bad son, Mrs. Blodgit; but, perhaps, he had business with these people. You know, I sometimes send my men to him."

"Oh! 'twarn't none of *your* men, major—'twas—"

Pete Blodgit fidgetted.

"Mother, you'd better let me talk about the business, to the major, by ourselves."

The guest perceived the anxiety of the speaker; nor did the changed tone of voice, with which he spoke, escape the observation of the former. It had its effect upon the mother also. The old woman immediately resumed her complaints of the rheumatiz; and rambled off into a comparison of her pains with those of Betsy Dollard. The guest was placid, and did not seek to press the point upon which he was, nevertheless, somewhat curious. He contented himself with playing upon the old woman, in another way.

"Your case is certainly a hard one, Mrs. Blodgit. What

with the rheumatism, the girl, and your unnatural son, your life must be very wretched. Now I can cure you of all three of these evils. Fling your physic out of the window, and try the bacon; give the girl to any young woman who has *not* got the rheumatism; and, as for Pete, I will take the cure of him upon myself. He shall go with me to camp to-morrow, and see if our orderly can't put him into the harness of good behavior."

"What! send Pete to camp, major, and he a lame person too, that can't walk, as I may say."

"You forget; he walks off with those peep-o'-day boys—"

"Oh! that's only once in a way, major."

"His lameness doesn't hurt him as an overseer. It's a crook only, not a weakness. A horse may be hipshot, you know, yet good at draught."

"But Pete ain't a horse, major."

"No, indeed; ef I was, mother, you'd ha' driven me to my last legs long ago!"

"Thar' ag'in, you onnateral sarpent!—" began the old woman, when the major interrupted her—

"You see, you can do nothing with a fellow so unkind and ungrateful. The camp's the only place to bring him to his senses."

"Oh! major, how you talk. Pete's a good son—thar' never was a better. He ongrateful and onkind?—tain't in him, major, to be onkind!"

"Yet he would have kept you up in that villanous loft, with the hens setting everywhere about you."

"Oh! Lord, major, for that matter I likes their company; and, as for the loft, it's not so bad a sleeping-place after all; and I'm old, and better out of the way up thar. Pete meant well, and I reckon, major, he was right all the time. Old people are apt to be onreasonable."

"But the bad company he keeps, old lady—the roystering night-stalkers, outlaws, and tories, for aught we know, who—"

"No! no! no tories, I'm sure! oh! major, Pete's one of the best friends of liberty in all these parts. Ef the men that comes to see him—only now and then—once a month, perhaps, not oftener—ef they wouldn't be a drinking here, for two hours at a stretch!—

"Shocking! and yet, would you believe it, your son, Pete, has not offered me a drop of Jamaica to take the salt of the bacon out of my throat."

"Why, Pete!" began the old woman, but the son, who had frequently shown himself restiff, and not unfrequently began the replies for his mother, now spoke quickly, and in tones somewhat louder than the occasion seemed to require—

"Mother, why will you be talking foolishness. You know very well that I keeps no liquor in the house—nara [neither] whiskey nor Jamaica; and when the men comes that you speak of, they brings their own liquor with 'em. You'll make the major b'lieve everything that's bad of me, and then he'll be turning me out of the house, and letting loose the tories upon me!"

The old woman whined from within, in assurances of her son's sobriety and virtue; and, with a smile upon his lips, the guest exclaimed—

"Say no more about it, old lady; your son, I suppose, is not unworthy of his excellent mother! And now, Master Pete Blodgit," he continued, speaking in lower tones, "lead the way to the hayloft. I'll take my sleep to-night in a bed of fodder."

"But it rains yit, major."

"Yes, I hear! But I am neither salt nor sugar, my good fellow; so lead the way!"

"Set down awhile, major, while I go, and brush up, and spread out the clean fodder—"

"Pshaw, man, do as I bid you," answered the stranger, laying his hands on the other's shoulder and looking him searchingly in the face. "I am a soldier, and accustomed to rough usage. Do not, by your prating, lead me to think that *your* usage has been too tender."

There was that in the glance of the stranger, beneath which the eyes of Pete Blodgit fell; there was something, too, in what the other said, which filled him with some misgivings. His dark swarthy features, under a stronger light than that of a "dipt" candle, would have shown themselves suffused with a deeper red than usual; and there was a tremor of his slight form, as the other laid hands upon his shoulder, which betrayed some lurking apprehensions. His consciousness was such that,

for a moment, he did not venture to reply. He was about to light a bit of candle, ingeniously socketed in a huge calabash, pierced with little holes, the substitute for a lantern, and not a bad one either — when his companion arrested the movement.

"Take no light, Blodgit. Carry your flint and steel and the candle in your pocket! Good-night, old lady."

"What, major, air you guine out into the weather?"

"Only to see if the rain has washed out all the stars."

"Oh! major, you will be for poking fun at the old woman. It's the way with you young ossifers."

Our traveller had some good-natured answer to this, while Pete Blodgit was undoing the entrance of the cabin; but, while speaking, the back of the other being turned, he contrived to lay gently upon the floor at his feet, and just where he had been sitting, a memorandum pocket-book. His movement escaped the notice of the cottager, and, in a moment after, the two disappeared in the night together, taking their way once more in the direction of the stables.

CHAPTER III.

ROGUE IN GRAIN.

The hay, or rather fodder-loft, which they sought, was above the stable. Entering this, the candle was lighted, and our traveller gave a look at his good steed. He was pleased to see that the beast pricked up his ears, and showed animation. Blodgit now supplied the trough with corn; and, this done, the two clambered up by a rude ladder into the loft above.

This great vaulted chamber was pretty well filled with fodder closely packed, clean, dry, well cured, and sweetly smelling. It offered a pleasant sleeping-place to the jaded traveller on a stormy night. It was ample enough; a house upon a house; high-roofed, with the square walls of the house running up above the floor some six feet, and forming, with the roofing, an apartment of considerable depth. The length and breadth fully corresponded with the height. The stables were calculated for the accommodation of fully thirty horses. At this moment, they contained that of our traveller only, and a stout hackney of Master Pete Blodgit. There was a single window at each end of the loft, through the crevices of which the light found its way usually with the dawn.

Our traveller had the precaution to conceal the candle by scooping out a space in the fodder piles, shrouding the gleams of the light, even so feeble as they were, from all possibility of being seen through the chinks of the building, by any chance passer on the outside. The two, now sitting down beside the candle, contributed still more effectually to the obscuration of it, which they seemed to desire. In this position the traveller began a conversation for which Pete Blodgit evidently waited with some impatience.

"I take for granted, Blodgit, that you are wise enough, and

honest enough, to be sensible of the kindness and liberality with which you have been treated by my sister and myself, and to be faithful to her interests and mine. In this, as I have already tried repeatedly to show you, lay your own interest—nay, safety! I have secured you the forbearance of our own people, and suffer you to keep up appearances with the British. I intrust to you the property of my sister, and give you a liberal support out of it. Your policy is to be faithful, even if you lacked the honesty—"

"But I am honest, major! Who says I ain't honest to you? I'd like to know! There's no man what has a right to—"

"I wish to believe you honest, Pete; yet how is it that you suffer drunken and drinking visiters, and night-ruffiers, to come about you? And who are these visiters? I hope you are not falling into bad company."

"Lord, no! major; that's jest the old woman's talk; and she wouldn't be an old woman, you know, ef she didn't talk, and talk, about them things that she don't onderstand. The people that come here, once or twice—and they was a-drinking set of fellows, I own—they were Marion's men—"

"What were Marion's men doing away from camp at this time?"

"Well, you see, he had let some of them come off, to see arter their families and their crops. They were some of the Baxters and Corries; young Tom Eigleberger, and Joe Purvis, and Dick Stairas, and some others, whose families live along the Edisto—"

"Enough of them, for the present! I am not satisfied that they have left camp with the general's permission, and the less you have to say to them, the better."

"Lord love you, major, it's only once in a way I seed them; I reckon, before this time, they're off to camp ag'in."

"So much the better for you, as for themselves! and now for our accounts. How much powder and ball have you been able to pick up?"

"Mighty leetle, major. The redcoats are getting shy of parting with ammynition. I don't think I've been able to git more than thirty weight of bullets, and a leetle more than half that quantity of powder."

"Any muskets?"

"Only three."

"How's this? Not one of my deputies but has been doing far better, in the time you've had. Ballou, alone, has been able to pick up more than forty weight of powder, thirteen muskets, and ninety-eight pounds of ball; besides sending thirteen Irish deserters into camp."

"Well, I can't say; but Ballou must be more in luck's way than me. I hain't had any chaince; besides, major, I've had so leetle money."

"How so? You've been selling corn and fodder, *I know!* I see even here, your pile has come down considerably! and how's the corn in the swamp fens?"

"Well, I hain't sold much, major. Mighty leetle, in fact—"

"Be sure, Pete Blodgit, of the truth of what you are about to tell me. I would not have you commit yourself. I would not wish to discharge you: but I will not be deceived; and I have the means of knowing. Speak out boldly, man, and in order to do so, be sure you speak nothing but the truth."

"Oh! to be sure, major; it's nothing but the truth that I'm guine to tell you! Now, you see, powder and shot is mighty scarce in these pairts. It's hardly to be had for love or money; and the money's scarce; for, though I hev' been selling a leetle provisions, yet, you see, the money you gits for it ain't always the right grit."

"You don't tell me, Pete Blodgit, that you've been taking continental money from the British, for my sister's corn and fodder."

"Well, you see, major, there warn't any help for it. Times ain't as they usen to be. Thar's no sich plenty of guineas now to be had, and sence the British hev' been a printing and counterfitting this continental paper, they're more likely to poke that into your fist than the yaller beauties."

The officer gazed sternly into the countenance of the other, whose eyes drooped slowly beneath his glance, as he sternly interrupted him—

"Why do you try to outwind me, Pete Blodgit, with this chattee about and about the truth. To the point, man. What corn and fodder have you sold, and what money have you got?"

"Well, major, don't be too rash now—jest let me count up and remember. Thar' was a matter of five loads of fodder that was tuk' away by that blasted squad of tories under Richebourg: and they wouldn't pay in nothing but the blasted paper."

"Why did you take it?"

"How could I help myself, major? They would ha' tuk' it anyhow."

"What! and you with Lord Rawdon's own protection in your podket?"

"'Twan't no use, major, with sich rapscallions as them. They jest laughed at the paper."

"Well—proceed!"

"Then thar' was Cappin' Creighton—"

"Regular service?"

"Yis—rigilars—but they paid *some* in continentals, and *some* in gould."

"How much gold?"

"I reckon, I had five guineas from him."

"Five guineas! well?"

"Then come Norris's dragoons, and they gin' me a leetle gold."

"How *much* gold?"

"Well, about five guineas more."

"That is ten, then, that you admit. How about Keene's squadron?"

"Oh! Keene—yes, I did sell some provisions to Cappin Keene, and he paid me a leetle gold too; say three guineas."

"Thirteen! what more?"

"Well, I don't recollect, jest now, any more, major, 'cept—"

"Except what?"

"Except what our own people got. Thar' was Cappin' Rumph got some with your order; and Ville-Pontoux, and that rough customer, Wannamaker; all of them had your order, and didn't pay nothing."

"No matter about *them*. You mean to tell me, Blodgit, that you've got only thirteen guineas for me?"

"Hain't got that, in gould, major; for, you see, the powder and ball, and the three muskets, had to be paid for out of that."

"A moment, my good fellow. How many of the corn-bins are empty?"

"Oh! none empty, major .... I hain't sold so much corn as that comes to."

"Ah, well! not sold so much corn! Stop a moment."

Here the stranger felt in his pockets.

"Where can my memorandum-book be? I must have left it, Blodgit, where I ate supper. I had it, certainly, before I sat down to table. Do run off to the house, and see after it; and, harkye, don't look into it, as it contains some private matters concerning the army."

The other eagerly rose, as if glad to escape the scrutiny which he had been undergoing; and, in a few moments, descended the ladder, and emerged from the stable, the door of which he locked behind him. The stranger smiled as he heard the bolt shot and the key withdrawn; and, rising stealthily, lantern in hand, he too descended, and proceeded at once to the stall where Blodgit's horse was fastened.

"Third stall from the right," he muttered to himself as he entered it; "three notches in centre-post, iron ring on top-post movable. Let us see—let us feel."

And, thus saying, he tried the post, which he readily found, and discovered that it was secured to the partition dividing one stall from another, by a single, but large screw—that it was nowhere *nailed* to the partition, and that it worked freely beneath his hand.

"So far, all promises to be true. The lying rascal! The ungrateful hound! But I will lay him utterly bare."

Having satisfied his curiosity in the stall, he secreted the lantern, drew a key from his pocket, and opened the door of the stable, carefully locked it, and withdrew the key; then stole off to the cabin, with a light, swift footstep, pursuing the route in the darkness, with the ease of one to whom it had been long familiar. The rain was still falling, but not heavily, and of this he seemed to take no heed. He passed to the rear of the building, and, through a crevice, was enabled to discern all the movements of Blodgit. The latter had already found the memorandum-book, but, in defiance of his instructions, was greedily turning over its pages, and reading its contents.

"Nothing here," he muttered, as he read; "nothing here, that I kin see, about the corn and fodder; but here's a mighty deal of information about Greene's army, and Marion's men, and Sumter's chickens, that I reckon Lord Rawdon would pay a pretty nice little amount in goulden guineas ef he could only read like me."

Suddenly, his mother, starting out of sleep, called to him from within: "Pete—Pete Blodgit—that you?"

He started with a shiver—the convulsion of guilt and fear—thrust the book hastily into his bosom, and strode, without answering, toward the door. She called again.

"That you, Pete?"

"Yes, it's me."

"What's the matter, Pete?"

"Matter enough. Here's the major a wanting to dream all the money out of me. I'd as leave he'd dream me of all the blood in my body."

"I'd dream *his* first, Pete Blodgit. I'd never let him hev' the gould that I hed once fairly got into my own hands. Come here to me, Pete, and let me tell you what you're to do."

"I kain't now! He's a waiting for me."

"Well, you're but a poor-sperited creature, ef you let him dream you of a copper. I'd draw a knife for it, Pete, I would!"

"Hush up: who knows but I may!"

"Amiable couple!" muttered the stranger, as he listened without; "and this, great God, is human nature; in a Christian land; where no house is without its Bible; where no precinct is without its preacher! Here is a mother, on the verge of the grave, counselling her own son to murder, for a paltry sum of gold! And these are people for whom I have found shelter and protection—whom I have kept from starvation—whom I still feed, and to whom I have given the very servant to whom they look for help and water!"

But there was no time for soliloquy. Pete Blodgit was already about to undo his door, and the stranger stole away swiftly in the direction of the stable. Here he housed himself, ascending once more to the fodder loft, and resuming his place quietly, as he heard the key of the other slowly turning in the lock

"You were long in finding it, Pete," said the guest, as Blodgit handed him the book.

"'Twas hard to find, major, as I hed to feel for it:—I hed no light, and did'nt want to wake the old woman to git the one she hed."

"Well, as you had no light, I needn't ask you whether you read anything in the book."

"It's mighty little skill I hev' in reading, any how; but you tell'd me not, you know."

Meanwhile, the stranger turned over the pages of the book; then, slowly speaking, he said:—

"Pete Blodgit, I have tried to favor you, but you will not let me. I warned you to speak the truth to me, but you have been deaf to the warning. Now, hear what *I know*. You have sold both cattle and provisions to Coffin's commissary, of which you have not told me a syllable."

"Oh! but he paid in continental currency, major."

"Not so, sir! He paid you in guineas, sir, forty-seven guineas, all of which were counted out into your own hands."

The fellow was dumb—his eyes dilated to a marvellous wideness—his lips quivered—his teeth almost chattered; but he could not deliver a syllable! The other gave him no respite.

"You sold to Fisher, also, and got your pay in gold—a matter of nine guineas:—but here, look over that list for yourself; and say what other items might be set down, which are *not* there, but which ought to be taken into count against you!"

The criminal took the paper mechanically, and, while the perspiration rolled down his face and forehead, he *seemed* to peruse the document. When he had done, the other said:—

"Now hand over to me all the money you've got."

Blodgit drew a leathern sack from his bosom which he delivered with some alacrity into the hands of the major. The latter untied it, spread his handkerchief, and poured out the contents, which he deliberately counted.

"Thirteen guineas, it seems; and this continental stuff?"

"Four thousand three hundred and thirty-five dollars!" Blodgit uttered the amount sonorously.

"Well remembered. Now, Blodgit, where's the twenty-five

dollars) as received in Spanish silver from Corporal Rickarts of the Hessian yagers?"

"Silver—Spanish dollars—O! major, I quite forgot that. I gin that to the old woman to keep. I'll go and git it right away."

"Nay, leave it with her! But how comes it, Blodgit, that this small balance is all that remains of the amount you have received?"

"Well, but, major,—there's the continental paper."

"None of that nonsense, Blodgit, will impose on me! Where's the gold?"

"And you forget, major, what I had to pay for the muskets, the powder and balls."

"Ah!—and where are they?"

"Thar! under the fodder in that corner."

"Good. Is the powder in kegs?"

"No, major, in sheep-skins and bladders; and tied up in two eends of a salt-bag."

"It is dry, then, and in convenient form for removal?"

"Oh! yes!"

"And this is all the money that you have?"

"It dreams all the blood out of me, major. I hain't got an other shilling, 'cept the Spanish dollars that I gin the old woman to keep."

"You would no doubt be grateful to any person who should show you that there was still some money left, both in gold and silver?"

"As I'm a living sinner, Major Sinclair, I hain't got two sixpences to rub ag'in each other. I swow!——"

"Stop, man! Don't rivet the chains of the devil about your soul by an oath!"

"What do you mean, major?"

"I'll show you, my good fellow, in a moment," said the other, gathering up the money, and returning it to the leathern wallet, which he deposited quietly in the body of his coat. This done, he said:—

'Take up the lantern!"

The fellow obeyed, and led the way, as his superior directed, to the ladder, both descending to the stable. Here Sinclair pointed to the stall containing the overseer's beast.

"Put your horse into another stall." It was done in silence. Blodgit obeyed, tremblingly, in all things.

"Unscrew me that post."

"Why, it's nailed down fast, major."

"Unscrew, unscrew!" The fellow submitted.

"Now pull up the post!"

"Why, major, it's onpossible, unless we dig. It's sunk deep in the airth."

"Try it!"

The fellow *appeared* to try, but the post *appeared* still to remain immovable. Sinclair approached it, passing the lantern into the hands of Blodgit. He then grasped the post with a single hand. As he did so, the light flickered — Blodgit having reached forward his right hand to the trough against which leaned an oaken billet. But whether he designed to grasp it or not, and for what purpose, must be only matter of conjecture, for, in that very moment, Sinclair turned full upon him, and clapped a pistol to his head.

"I tell you, hold the lantern! Make a movement, to the right or the left, and I blow your brains out."

The fellow fairly shivered, but he made out to stammer:—

"Why, major, what's the trouble? What em I doing?"

"Enough, Pete Blodgit, that I know you! Hold that lantern steadily. Beware!"

With this speech — as if satisfied of his securities — he deigned not another word, or look, to the fellow; but, with a single hand, tore up the post from the spot where it seemed to be firmly planted in the earth. This act required no effort, the post having been maintained in an erect position simply by the single screw — a large one indeed — which had fastened it to the partition.

"Leave the stall! Go to the next and hold your lantern over," was the stern command of his visiter, in tones that coerced the will of the listener. Blodgit obeyed in silence, while Sinclair, stooping to the hole left by the post, drew up an old powder-keg by a rope-hitch, which had been made about it.

"You are surprised, Mr. Pete Blodgit, at my discovering golden treasures where you had none," said Sinclair, as, with

the muzzle of his pistol, he knocked in the head of the keg, and laid bare its contents. Blodgit groaned aloud as the other poured out the guineas into a great belt which he had drawn from his bosom, and now strapped about his body.

"Why do you groan, man! Ought you not rather to rejoice at my good fortune?"

The other groaned again.

"Pete Blodgit," said Sinclair, "your gnawing avarice has made you a rogue and a traitor. Were I to serve you rightly, I should abandon you to your fate;—nay, have you hung to the first swinging bough! But you are sufficiently punished by the loss of your ill-appropriated treasure. Now hear me. I have an eye upon you, and no trust in you! My spies shall watch you. I shall give you *one* more trial. Do you try and be faithful! I shall leave in your hands the corn and fodder still, to be sold out as it is called for. I shall leave you the negro-girl to help your mother as before. You have the hogs, the cattle, and the poultry; and a cover over your own heads. Be faithful!"

Blodgit fell upon his knees.

"Oh! Lord, major, have mercy upon me! It was the old woman that tempted me!"

"Silence, rascal, and say nothing of your mother! I doubt if she knows of your proceedings. It is the bad company you have kept, sirrah, your own gnawing avarice, your own corrupt heart, that have led you to sin! Away, now!—not a word—and rout me up at daylight. I will then give you my further instructions. Take the light with you, and begone!"

The culprit did not wait a second order. He dashed out; and Sinclair heard him shoot the bolt and draw out the key, and fancied that there was a deliberate something in the way of his doing it, that spoke for a secret satisfaction, in the thought of the fellow, which seemed to give him consolation even after his losses. The other smiled scornfully, however, and muttered:—

"Rascal! He thinks he has me fast till morning! But I will teach him another lesson. Does he suppose me silly enough to have faith in him, after I have found him out—after I have stripped him of his stolen treasures—after I have shown

him that I *know* him! No! no! master Blodgit; I only stroke the cat's fur until I can get beyond reach of her claws! There is work to be done before morning! Were I to linger till peep of day, I should never see another. The scamp would soon have a score of his Jamaica-seekers busy with their knives about my throat. I must try and keep it sound for sweeter customers."

CHAPTER IV.

HOW TO TRAIN A CAT INTO A TIGER.

We are not sure that all rascals have a like share of sensibility with Master Pete Blodgit, and exhibit the same degree of mortification upon detection. We do not, indeed, pretend to say that Pete's mortification was the result of any peculiar sense of shame; and are half inclined to suspect that he would not have cared a button about the exposure of his short-comings, and dubious reckonings, with his employer, had the other not shown himself so exacting—so tenacious about his returns, and so pressing and so punctilious in respect to immediate restoration. That discovery of the hiding-place of his treasure, held to be so perfectly secure—*that* was the crowning misery and mortification, that sent Pete to his wigwam, almost howling with fury. A sneaking, cur-like scoundrel naturally, his vexation, under this affliction, was such as to sublime itself to rage; and he felt, for a moment, almost disposed to put on the armor of heroism, and boldly grapple with the insolent assailant who had so suddenly dispossessed him of his accumulated spoils.

But Pete was not by nature endowed to be a hero. He might have brained Sinclair with his bludgeon, and probably would have tried to do so, had the opportunity been allowed him—as we half suspect was his intention, at the moment when his secret treasure was discovered;—but, to brave the enemy boldly, with naked weapon, front to front, and eye looking into eye, was by no means the course of action which Pete was prepared either by nature or education to attempt.

But he could rage fiercely, the danger not present—nay, resolve terribly in the moment of security—and his wrath burst forth into a perfect yell, when he found himself fairly within his cabin, with the door fastened behind him. He dashed the lantern down upon the table, and smote the table itself with a

heavy fist, while groan after groan broke from his breast, the proof of that terrible avarice which filled his heart, and which had been thus deprived of all its accumulated provision, "at one fell swoop!"

His mother, who was naturally wakeful, and whom the previous communication of the son had rendered anxiously so, now cried to him from within:—

"Well, Pete, you hain't given up the gould?"

"Hain't I then? Hell! what could I do?"

"What, all? You don't say all?"

"Every copper! I'm *dreaned* of every button!"

"I'd ha' died first!" responded the venerable rheumatic. "I'd ha' tried knife and bullet for it, before I'd ha' let myself be dreaned of all my hard yairnings by any man that ever broke bread. But I always told you, you was a mean-spernted critter! What's a man good for, ef he won't stand a fight for his yairnings?"

"Oh! hush, I say, mother! You don't know! How em I to stand up to a fair fight, me a lame pusson, and a small pusson to boot, with sich a powerful man as Willie Sinclair? You know it's all nonsense to talk so."

"Who talks of a fair fight, but your own fool-head? I knows well enough you'd be nothing in the hands of Willie Sinclair, ef he know'd what you was a-driving at. But you've had chainces enough of doing the thing without any fight at all! Whar' was your eyes, your hand, your knife, when he was a-eating, or a-lying down, or a-counting out the money, or looking over his papers? Lord! ef I had been me, I reckon I could ha' found a hundred chainces for laying him over the head with a hickory, or driving a sharp knife clar down into his ribs. Thar's always chainces enough for any man that's got a man's heart in his buzzom, Pete Blodgit! But you ain't no man at all, as I've told you a thousand times. Ef you was a man, 'twouldn't all now stand as it is; and Willie Sinclair wouldn't git off with that gould, though he's got it in his pocket, as you say. Thar's many ways for spiling a man's marching, ef that' was only a man ready to chuck the wheels, or cut the traces."

"Well, hush, now, mother. 'Tain't all over yit, as you say; and I'm a-thinking how I shall work it."

"Oh! much good your thinking will do you, Pete, ef you does it all by your own self. Come in here to me, and we'll talk it over together. It makes me strain my throat too much to talk to you out thar'. Come in, I say! Lord! ef I was only a man!"

"I wish you was!" sullenly responded the son, as he passed into the chamber.

"Set down thar'—'longside of me on the bed, Pete—set down! And, now, tell me all about it, Pete. You say he tuk' the whole thirteen guineas, and gin' you nothing?"

"Thirteen guineas! Lord! ef that was all!—it was nigh on to a hundred guineas that he dreaned out of me! It was!"

"The Lord ha' marsy upon my poor soul! And you let any man sweep you clean, of nigh on to a hundred guineas, and you never struck a stroke?"

"Well, you needn't go on a-saying the same foolish thing over and over ag'in, as ef I had no feelin's!" growled the fellow impatiently.

"And I wonder what's the sarvice sich feelin's as yours are a-guine to do any free white man? Ef the right feelin's was in your buzzum, you'd a dreaned his heart's blood, afore he'd ha' dreaned your pockets!"

"Oh! you needn't talk, neither; we'll see what you're a-guine to say and to do, when he comes at you in the morning for that bag of silver dollars I gin' you to put away."

"What! you didn't tell him of them dollars, too, did you?" almost screamed the old woman.

"How could I help it? He know'd all about it! He know'd everything?"

"And how kin he to know?"

"From the devil himself, I reckon; for I kain't guess how he found out everything, even to the kag of guineas in the stable."

"And a pretty place to hide a kag of guineas! Oh! Pete Bludgit, ef you was a born ediot you couldn't ha' done a more foolish thing!"

"Well, we'll see how you'll hide away them dollars when he comes for 'em in the morning."

"And you're a-guine to let him see morning shine, you poor

sperrited, mean critter! You'll let him dream me, too, of all the leetle bit of money I've put away ag'in bad weather?"

"Well, it's his own money—that is, it's his sister's, which is the same thing, you know."

"And what do I care for him, or his sister? What's in my pocket's mine, I tell you; and I'll hold on to it, as I would to dear life, I tell you! He's a fool that lets himself be bled to death, and dreamed of all his yairnings, when there's a way to stop the dream."

"Ha! that's it! How will you stop the dream? Jest let me know what you'll say and do to save them Spanish dollars?"

"Ef you was the right sort of man, you'd be doing without axing me. But, as you ain't, I'll tell you. Oh! ef I was a man, I wouldn't waste words on you nor him! I'd do it myself, and nobody'd be the wiser of what was done till it was too late to put in with a 'stop you thar!' Look you, Pete Blodgit, I kin hardly lift a leg, therefore 'tain't possible for me to do nothing; but you—you must pluck up heart, Pete, and jest do as I tell you."

"Git on—quick! You're a-burning daylight!"

"Well: you've a gun! Ain't thar' a way to shoot through the logs?"

"Not easy! Besides, in all them blades, thar's no saying in jist what place he sleeps."

"Then you must knife him as he sleeps!"

"Easy enough, ef you could git at him without waking him. But that's the trouble. While you're a-working your way at him, he mayn't be taking it easy."

"And kain't you sneak like a cat, ef you kain't fight like a tiger. Kain't you git into the stable, boy, without *screaking* the lock as it turns, or the door on its hinges? You've got the key, and you've got the feet and cunning of a cat!"

"Ay, the key's safe"—and he drew it from his pocket—"and he's safe, too, till morning."

"Good! And so you git into the stable, and creep up into the loft, and feel about, softly, as any kitten, and jest you make sure when you go to stick!"

"He'll wake for sartin! The fodder's all about, and it will rustle."

"No! no! he won't wake! He's pretty well tired down by his riding. I know'd it from his talk, and he said as much. He'll sleep sound like a bag of feathers, I tell you, the moment he lays himself down for it. But jest you take your time, and feel your way, and be up and doing, with a heart that's all the time a-telling you—'Pete, don't you lose them guineas! Giminie! a'most a hundred! And you hed a'most a hundred guineas, you mean-spirited critter, and never let your own mother know a word about it?"

"Oh! hush about all that, mother! The thing now is how to git 'em back."

"Hev'nt I told you? Go you now, and set about it. Do it as I tell you. You were a born sneak, and ought to be able to crawl up, and feel where his heart beats, and drive your knife down hard like a hammer."

"I won't try the knife. I hev' pistols; good ones, too, with mouths like bulldogs; and a pair half-ounce ballats in 'em both."

"The knife's safest, Pete! Git your heart up! That's what you want! Only a leetle more of the tiger, and less of the cat, and Willie Sinclair wouldn't ha' seen the shine of them guineas, and won't carry 'em off, now he's got 'em!"

"I'll take both—knife and pistols! But I'm deuced jubous about it, mother. Ef I miss, and he should wake, he'll chop me to sausage-meat in a twink!"

"What! and you with two pistols in your gripe?"

"Yes! ef I had twenty! He's got something that I wants, mother, and what makes a fighting-man."

"It's the heart, Pete! But you've got a heart for the guineas, and a man ought to fight for the thing he loves! A'most a hundred guineas! Pete Blodgit, ef you let's Willie Sinclair git off with them hundred guineas, I'll cut your heart out! I will! Go! sneak upon him, and dig into his ribs until you hear the rattle in his throat! Never stop digging till you hear him gurgle out his last! It's for a hundred guineas, you know!"

And clutching the fellow by the wrist, with a savage energy, as she spoke, she drew him toward her with one hand, while with the other she smote him upon the breast, as if to show him the exact manner in which the deed was to be done. Pete wondered at the sinewy grasp which the old woman still pos-

sessed, and could not forbear murmuring—an equal acknowledgment of his own feebleness and her strength of will—"Ah! mammy, ef I only had sich a heart as your'n in my buzzum!"

"Ah! Pete, but I was a she-tiger one time! Your daddy know'd it well. He warn't no coward neither, Pete; yet many a times he said to me—'Polly, you ought to have been a man and a sodger!' and, the Lord knows, I ought! But you've got heart enough, Pete, ef you'll only trust to it! You're afeard of your own heart, now; and that's bad, bekaise it keeps you from trying! But jest you try now, Pete, and mind and do it as your old mammy tells you! Snake it into the stable, and up the loft, and go on snaking it tell you feel jest where's he's a-lying; then put it to him, quick and hard! Only be sure and feel first where to stick. Go now, quick, and do it! Do it, I say! or don't you let me see that face of your'n ag'in!"

"I'll do it!" exclaimed the son, starting up with a show of resolution which delighted the old woman, and encouraged the wretch himself.

"Do it, Pete, like a man! and while you're a-doing it, I'll be a-praying for you, Pete—your mother will be praying for you, Pete! Never forgit, when the time comes for you to strike, that there's a hundred guineas depending upon it, in the dead man's pocket!"

The promise to pray for him, while he sped on his devout mission, seemed very much to encourage our young Christian; since he now began to move with a greatly increased show of determination and energy. He examined his pistols, felt the charge with the ramrod, picked the flints, saw to the priming, then stuck the weapons in his girdle. His *couteau de chasse*—for Pete was a hunter, equally of hogs and deer—he subjected to as careful a scrutiny; and, satisfied with his tools, he threw open his door in order to proceed to work; but closed it again, quick as lightning, with an exclamation of surprise, if not apprehension—

"What'n the name of old Billzebub can that be a-coming!"

Let us leave him for a brief space, while we see to other parties in this our history, from whom we may also learn the cause of Master Blodgit's surprise.

CHAPTER V.

THE HELL-FIRE DICKS.

We have seen that Willie Sinclair had his doubts respecting the virtue of the good people inhabiting the cottage, though he could not exactly conjecture in what particular mode it was destined to be exercised in respect to himself. His precautions, however, were so taken as measurably to prepare him for any of the peculiar processes of Master Blodgit. Scarcely had the latter disappeared with his light into the cottage, than our hero proceeded to *his* preparations.

The first step was to put his good steed into harness. Nimrod was not quite satisfied with the performance, but he was docile; and only showed his dissatisfaction by a more rapid demonstration upon the ears of corn still remaining unmunched in the trough. He sought thus to provide against the necessity of soon departing from pleasant pastures;—a lesson of forethought which the war-horse and soldier acquire with singular and equal aptitude; and, while his master clapped on saddle-cloth and saddle, he buried his head deep in the trough, with a dogged resolution to keep it there just as long—as he was permitted. He did not exactly anticipate the sort of duty he was to perform, or the burden he was to carry; but he had old experiences of the rough usages of war; and he was one of those philosophical horses that always prepare for the worst, and meekly resign themselves to what they can not resist—Not that he was a beast wanting in spirit! See him on a charge, and there could be no doubt about his blood. But your generous bloods are always most gentle; and docility is one of the best proofs of the longest-lived courage, whether in man or beast.

Sinclair patted Nimrod's shoulders affectionately, and left him saddled and bridled, but unbitted, still munching with head in

the trough. The trooper next went above, and brought down from the loft the sack of powder, the muskets and bullets, which Blodgit had stored away. The performance, carried on entirely in the dark, was necessarily a somewhat slow one: but Sinclair knew the precincts well; and, being equally cool and prompt, he contrived to do the work in the least possible period of time. The powder, alone, did he strap upon the steed. The muskets and bullets he carried forth—using his pass-key to emerge from the stable—into the contiguous woods, some two hundred yards from the stable, where he hid them in the hollow of a tree;—the route to which he pursued with little difficulty—like one accustomed—in spite of the darkness which hung heavily over the scene. A few handfuls of the bullets, alone, did he sling upon the crupper of his horse.

"What with my weight, Nim," quoth he, addressing his steed—"a round hundred and fifty at least—this goodly pouch of guineas, some twenty weight of powder, and a few pounds of ball, you have something to carry besides your provender, old fellow!—but two hours will suffice—two hours."

And he stroked the mane of the beast affectionately, slipped the bridle over his neck, now bitted him, and satisfied himself, by a nice examination, that his preparations were all complete. This done, he stole forth once more from the stable, and took his course toward the dwelling of Blodgit and his dam. All *seemed* to be quiet in that quarter, and, whether it was that Blodgit had concealed his light, or extinguished it, no gleam was apparent through the crevices of the cabin. Satisfied now that he might bring out his horse in safety, Sinclair returned to the stable and did so.

The beast offered no objections, and did not even exhibit the reluctance which we are very sure he felt. His master did not mount, but led the animal, with shortened rein, around the stable; then struck for the woods above, by a course which carried him as far as possible from the house. His object was to gain the road without alarming the senses of the overseer.

He had proceeded, in this cautious manner, about a hundred yards, when he fancied that he heard a cry, and a sound of voices, brought up by the night wind.

He paused to listen. The rain had ceased to fall, the wind

was freshening, a few stars began to peep out, through certain rents, here and there, in the "blanket of the dark," and the prospect was that of a clear morning. Still, the atmosphere was sufficiently damp to form a good medium for the transmission of sound, and the rising breeze favored the conveyance. The cries were repeated; and Sinclair was now satisfied that they issued from human throats.

He hurried his steed onward, still leading him, until he had increased the space between himself and Blodgit's sty-ram to some three hundred yards; then, hiding the animal in a thick bit of wood, not more than fifty yards from the roadside, he coolly took his way back alone toward the cottage, to which the sounds continued to approach from below. They proved to be the shouts of men, doubtless half drunk, who, as they rode, shrieked and yelled like mad;—and the heavy tramp of their horses could be heard mingling with their cries.

The quick, intelligent mind of Sinclair readily conceived the approaching parties to belong to that gang of idle, and, no doubt, outlawed persons, of whom good Mrs. Blodgit had unwittingly revealed her son's knowledge; and the major of dragoons silently congratulated himself on having so seasonably left the stable. But he did not, for this, conceive the necessity of immediate flight. On the contrary, it became a good soldierly policy, just at this juncture, to see who these people were. He relied for his security on his own precautions;—on the fact that he could not be tracked during the darkness, and with so much water on the ground. Besides, not being supposed by Blodgit to have left the stable, he held a position of great vantage, which made large odds in his favor, in the event of that worthy designing any evil against him. Accordingly, he continued to press on toward the cottage, keeping his person covered, wherever he could, by the trees—of each of which he seemed to possess an individual knowledge. He finally made his way so closely to the cabin that a few steps, at any moment, would bring him to any quarter of it.

It was just at this moment, that Pete Blodgit, having worked up his courage to the striking, or rather to the sticking point, under the counsels of his virtuous dam, was preparing to go forth, pistols at girdle and knife in hand, in the direction of the

stable. But Pete's courage was not of a very certain quality. He had reached the door of his wigwam, and opened it, when his ears were saluted by the distant shoutings which had startled Sinclair.

"What can that be?" he muttered, instinctively reclosing the door. Another shout, more distinct, showed the cries to be approaching.

"It's 'Hell-fire Dick,' by the pipers, and I reckon he's got Skin-the-Satpent and Yallow Janders along with him."

The shouts now reached his mother's ears.

"Pete! Pete!" she cried, "there's your fellows, now, and they're just come in time to spile your sport. May the devil take 'em who sent 'em!"

"To spile it!—no, indeed! They've come to help! I reckon Willie Sinclair kain't git off from the gripe of Hell-fire Dick."

The cowardly heart of Pete Blodgit, which had begun to shrink already at the thought of the encounter he might have with Sinclair, suggested to him an alliance with the ruffian he had named, for the better execution of the task which he himself feared to perform. But the shrewder avarice of the old woman conceived, in a moment, all the dangers of such an alliance.

"You're a born fool, Pete Blodgit, ef ever there was one! and when 'Hell-fire Dick' settles with Willie Sinclair, who's guine to make Hell-fire Dick settle with you? Do you reckon on him giving up any of the gould to you, ef so be he does all the work?"

"But I ain't guine to let him do all! I'll git him to help me, and I'll let him have a share."

"What sort o' share will he give you? A guinea out of the hundred! No! no! Pete:—you don't want no help to settle a sleeping man! Snake it yourself, Pete; and don't ax for any help. Don't let Hell-fire Dick and the other fellows know that Willie Sinclair is here. Git 'em off as soon as you kin, and then do it all by yourself. Give 'em the rum that they're a coming after; for I know you've got a kag, though you did swear to the major that you hadn't a drop——

"And I hadn't *for him!*"

"Right enough! He warn't the person to be told what you hed. Let these chaps hev' the liquor, and say nothing about the cost; and ax 'em for no money, and hide the cards out o' sight, and don't offer to play; but jist you git 'em off as soon as you kin, and hurry to the business by your *one* self. Ef you kin git your own heart strong for it, Pete, the work is easy enough. But you're so mean-sperited. You've no more heart for anything than a possum. Oh! ef I was a man!—or ef I wasn't jist the same as tied down to the floor by this cussed rheumatiz, I'd never let one of them gould guineas go out of that fodder loft, 'cept with my consenting."

The shouting visiters were now at the entrance. The virtuous couple were silent, waiting the summons for admission. Three or four horses galloped heavily up to the wigwam, and with shout, and whoop, and yell, and halloo, Hell-fire Dick smote upon the door.

"Hello, in thar, Pete Blodgit! Up with you, my yaller chicken, and let's see ef you've got over the pip yit! Open to the sky-scrapers, and the bouncing wild cats; and hear 'em scream to beat all nater! Whoo! whoo! whoo! whoo!—

> "We are the lads o' the morning,
> That are off by the peep o' day;—
> And we never take any warning
> To be off, when the work is play."

"We are the beautiful sinners of salvation, and don't care for the man that prays. Let's in, Pete! Open, little fellow, or we'll make your slapboards fly! 'Twon't take much to give your cabin a slant! What 'say, boys—won't a back-and-rush of the nags do it? Whoo! whoo! open, I say!"

And bang, bang, upon the door, went the repeated blows from whip and bludgeon; a perfect storm-chorus of shout and song, and oath and "hellaballoo," echoing the glib speech of the fiery leader of the gang.

"Hello, out thar! What's the mischief? Who's to come in?" was the response of Pete from the house, spoken drawlingly, with several yawns between, as if he had been roused from sleep.

"Open to the devil and all his imps!" was the yell. "He's come a'ter you at last! You've had a honey time, my chick-

en! Time's up! Hev' to go, lad. No git off now. Hell's hot! Don't keep your master waiting! Open, I say! Whoo! whoo! whoop! Hurrah for old Henry!"

And Pete was fain to undo the door in short order, to save it from the blows which thundered upon it, and threatened to drive it from bolt and hinges. Scarcely had the valves parted, Blodgit showing himself at the entrance, when his shoulders were saluted with a smart stroke of Hell-fire Dick's whip, laid on with unction, once, twice, thrice!

"The devil smacks sweet and close, Honey Pete," cried the desperado, as he flung himself recklessly from his horse into the hall; never once heeding the angry cry which Blodgit gave under his sharp infliction. Three other fellows followed the example of their leader, darting in with shout and scream, and flinging their bridles to the victim.

"Hitch 'em, Pete; or, better take 'em to the stable, and fling 'em down some fodder. We'll make a short night of it with you. Hitch 'em first to a swinging limb, and let's have some Jamaica to take the taste of this all-fired rainwater out of our skins. Be spry now, my chicken, and don't keep a gentleman devil a-waiting on your tarrapin motions."

The old woman groaned aloud from within—groaned to make them hear.

"What the blazes does the old woman grunt about! Hello, in thar, mammy! what's the trouble, in your intrails, that you give out so tremenjus?"

"Trouble enough, you rapscallions, when such tear-devils as you comes about one's house. I wish you was all in the bottom of the infarnal pit where you're bound for. Git along with you now, and leave a poor sick body in peace, won't you? Thar's no rum here, I tell you; thar's nothing here to make you stay."

"En' I'd like to see what there is to make us *go!*" growled back one of the ruffians, whom they knew by the *nom de guerre* of "Skin-the-Serpent."—"Shet up, most respectable old lady, and no matter what you do, don't forgit to go decent. A civil tongue in your head will be all the better of a sick woman. As for no rum, we'll see that Pete Blodgit looks jest where he knows to find it!"

"Ef he don't, we'll find him wanting!"

"Yes, indeed! and whar' will he be then? We know a trick or two, old lady, to convart your son into a puncheon, and make the red liquor run from him as free as water from the clond. Ho! Pete, gi's another candle here. Thar's no seeing how beautiful you air, by this cussed spitting dip. Whoop! Hoss, be spry ef you wouldn't hev' another devil's smack jest on the shoulders whar' it's already raw."

Blodgit obeyed in all things like a beaten hound. He knew his masters. They knew their slave. They drove him hither and thither, finding him ceaseless employment, until they were fully engaged upon the rum, which, by this time, he had paraded upon the table.

Around this each ruffian took his place. Tin cups formed their only drinking vessels. The rum was scarcely mingled with water, dashed only, as it were, apologetically. The two tallow-candles, which smoked and spate, rather than burned upon the board, enable us sufficiently to survey the group which better lights might only have shown to be too hideous for inspection.

"Hell-fire Dick"—he had lost the proprietorship of any more Christian name—presided; his visage, scarred and savage, fully justifying the title which he bore. His eyes were great and rolling, owl-like, in a broad but degraded forehead. The black hair came down over cheeks and neck, worn long to conceal some horrid scars. His lips had been split by stroke of sabre. His teeth projected, very white, like enormous spades. They were his pride; and he claimed to be as powerful in the grips of his jaw, as in that of the fist. He was a stout and swarthy giant—short, thick, with bull-dog figure and figure-head—and a neck, as he himself was apt to boast, quite too short for a rope. Yet, the monster wore a signet-ring—whence got, Heaven knows, garnished with skull and cross-bones for crest. It became his deeds. He was one of those scoundrel-pirates of the land—like the pirates of the sea, in a previous century—who exulted only in the terrors they inspired. He was a notorious outlaw, one of the few surviving Scophilites—a banditti, which, at the opening of the revolutionary discontents in Carolina, had carried crime and terror to many a happy homestead.

It would be useless to inquire after the birthplace of such a monster. The earth always breeds such in seasons of civil war. The first we hear of Joel Andrews—afterward "Hell-fire Dick"—was in Florida. He passed thence through Georgia to Carolina—was driven out as an outlaw—sought refuge again in Florida, and returned to Carolina, as a loving loyalist, as soon as the British arms had acquired the ascendency in that province.

Sam Brydone, *alias* "Skin-the-Serpent," "Rafe Brunson," or "The Trailer," and "Joe Best," were the three companions of "Hell-fire Dick." They were creatures of the same kidney, though of humbler rank as rascals. They never refused to follow where Dick led; but they were not the persons to lead while he was to be found. Still, it would be doing great wrong to their abilities to say, that, were he lost to the fraternity, each of them would not be possessed of the necessary faculty to carry on the enterprising business in which they commonly engaged—not to fight exactly, but to gather spoils from those who did, was their vocation. They were the vultures in the track of armies—the jackals in the wake of the lion! They were quite free to fight, nevertheless; but never for mere fun. Theirs was a tolerably cool calculation of what was to come of it, before they crossed steel, or lifted rifle. Now, we may say, their purpose, in the visit to Pete Blodgit, was a mere carouse; to drink, game, swear, sing, howl, or shout away the hours—nothing more. They were, just at this moment, in their most amiable phase. In seeking Pete Blodgit's wigwam, they anticipated nothing more than a night of debauchery; the worthy Pete, who, on several scores, enjoyed a sort of virtuous immunity with both parties using his reputation as an innocent man, in driving various pretty little practices, for debauching the troops of both armies, and plucking what pigeons, of either side, he could safely manage. He contrived to get supplies of rum and sugar—lemons occasionally—from Charleston, by the heads of Cooper river; and had certain comely associates, in the garrison, who were, without openly discrediting, the British epaulette.

Sinclair surveyed this group of scoundrels, at his ease, through the crevices of the cabin. He had some previous knowledge of

all of them. They had become notorious enough, along the Santee and Edisto, for the worst crimes in the calendar; and had been outlawed, under various names, by both Marion and Sumter. These partisans had posted them along the wayside, upon blazes of the trees, authorizing all good citizens to arrest, and bring them to camp as felons, and to put them to death if they resisted. While the armies lay below, and were in force along the regions named, these obscene birds kept close in sundry hiding-places. The swamp gave them a refuge quite as secure as it afforded to the patriots. The diversion, to the upper country, of the forces of the patriots and British, had given the outlaws temporary freedom. They were now making full use of their brief immunity, and had already shown themselves in various places, which were by no means prepared for them, enacting crime, and inspiring terror, where they came. The traveller butchered by day, the farmhouse fired by night,—these deeds suddenly shocked and terrified the quiet precincts, which, in the diversion of the war from the lower to the upper country, had forgotten some of their precautions

The sterner passions of Willie Sinclair grew fearfully aroused as he looked in upon the savage group.

"Would to God I had but half a dozen of my troopers here at this moment!" was his soliloquy, muttered through his clenched teeth. "How freely would I deliver every mother's son of them to the swinging limb! It is well that I moved so promptly. In that stable-loft, they would have fired it over my head rather than suffer my escape. I could have slain one or more of them no doubt. But I must have perished—burned alive or butchered—as I sallied forth. Thank God, we have the open woods for it if there is to be any trouble; and I have the track of them! But something may be done to increase my securities."

Thus saying, the major of dragoons, as if confirmed in a previously-meditated purpose, moved confidently round to the front of the cottage, and made his way to the tree, to the branches of which Pete Blodgit had fastened the horses of the outlaws. Here he drew from his belt a large and sharp knife, with which he smote off one of the stirrups from each saddle. He then slipped the bridle of each steed, and set the animals

free, taking the bridles off with him to a thick patch of brush and briers, into which he thrust them all, completely out of sight.

"They'll have work to pick up the horses, and something more to follow with fleet spur. That they will try to pursue, I nothing question. This rascal, Blodgit, will reveal all. He will desire their help, and, to procure it, will report the gold in my possession. The temptation will be too great for them to resist. They are now sufficiently audacious, and have no notion that we have any troop below. Still less do they dream of my own squadron upon the Santee, and of the troop of Peyre St. Julien, at Lenauck. Were my own boys but five miles nearer; but they will surely be at the Barony by noon to-morrow. Let them pursue, the scoundrels!—they can't well get ahead of me, unless the devil helps them; and I can maintain the Barony against so small a party until help shall arrive."

From brief muttered soliloquies like these, we may gather the essential clues to the relations of the several parties. Sinclair moved away as he spoke, gave one more look at the outlaws at their carousals, then sped off, with steps at once firm and cautious, to the spot where he had fastened his horse. Mounting, he turned the beast out of the woods into the main road, leading upward, and went forward at a moderate trot, as if unapprehensive of the dogs of danger at his heels.

He had calculated the chances fairly. He was not a moment too soon upon the road.

CHAPTER VI.

ALL-FOURS.

"The pictera, Pete," said Hell-fire Dick, as he emptied his cup of Jamaica, and handed the vessel to one of his companions for a fresh supply. "Bring out the pictera."

"What—ah!" was the hesitating answer of Blodgit, showing no disposition to obey, yet not prepared to adopt the plan of bold denial which his mother had counselled.

"Well, what the —— are you gaping about! The cards, I say!"

"And I say no playing cards here to-night!" cried the old woman, from within. "Git you off now, all of you, and don't be keeping a poor sick woman a suffering the want of sleep bekase of sich company as you. I'd thank you all to be a riding, and not be making a sick woman sicker by your noise."

"What's that howling in there, Pete?" said Hell-fire Dick, turning savagely upon the overseer. "Is it any wild animal?"

"It's only the old woman. She's mighty sick, I tell you, and sore with the rheumatiz, and all sorts of sufferings."

"That's good reason why she shouldn't be sore upon the tongue. Shut up, old woman, unless you'd wear a snaffle for the rest of your life, and not wear it too long at that. I've got a mighty good way of curing a sore tongue. We tried it first on that old hag, mother Gelzer. We routed up her rogue of a husband, one night, and haltered him to the bedpost while we looked into his consarns. The old hag, his wife, kept up the fire so hot, that 'Skin-the-Sarpent' gin her a tap that sent her into the fireplace. But she scrambled out, half blazing and full of ashes, and never seemed to mind the burn at all; her tongue going worse than ever. 'Sarpent' wanted to cut her tongue out; but I showed him how the thing was to be done.

I slipped a snaffle into her jaws—firmly bitted her—and by a hitch back of the ears, made of deers' sinews, made as good a *kaird* as ever took the heel of a troublesome colt! She a-most gnawed through tongue and snaffle both, but it stood: and it's surprising how quiet she was after that. Let your mammy hear that history, Pete, and she'll may be grow more sensible than to put in, when men's upon business with one another."

It did not need that Pete should repeat the history. His amiable mother had heard every syllable. But the fate of mother Gelzer did not discourage her tongue in its habitual exercise; particularly when she thought of the night rapidly escaping, and the chances of Willie Sinclair's getting off safely with the hundred guineas.

"I ain't afeared of your hitch, you onmannered rascal; only you try it on me, and ef you never had the taste of a raw knife in your vitals before, you'll have it then. Ef Pete Blodgit wasn't the most mean-spirrited fellow in the world, he'd never stand thar, and let any beast on two legs say imperdent things to his poor old mother what's got the rheumatis. Oh! ef I was only able to lift a leg, you wouldn't be having sich carryings on in any house whar I was the mistress. Here, Pete—Pete Blodgit, I say—come in here to me!"

"And I say, Pete Blodgit," answered Hell-fire Dick, "do you stay here with me; and I say, get out the pictars here, in double quick time, if you wouldn't have sich a spur in your redickilous sides as will make you think a thousand wild cats was a travelling through you."

"Feeling's believing, Pete," cried Skim-the-Serpent, taking the overseer by the nape of the neck, and spinning him round the floor like a tee-to-tum. "Thar!" continued the fellow, "do you understand now that we want the pictars?"

"And will *hev*' 'em!" echoed Ralph Brunson, following up the game, and spinning the fellow round in the opposite direction. Then, grappled in like manner by Joe Best, Pete executed such revolutions as a drunken man sees going on in the heavens as he goes home on a starry night.

"I'll git 'em! I'll git the kairds—only gi' me a chaince! Lord ha' marcy, men, you're all so rumbunctious!'

The poor devil could no more have seconded the manhood

of his mother, than he could undertake the journey on Alborak to Mahomet's Paradise.

"Quick about it, then, pretty Pete; we wants to be doing."

The cards soon made their appearance: a well-thumbed pack, greasy and ragged by repeated use, and with his majesty's face, well smutted, upon them.

"The Jack of Spades is a gentleman," cried Hell-fire Dick, seizing them across the table—and yelling out the chorus of a gaming party well known in that day—in which Joe Best, who prided himself on a voice, took up the strain, and fairly outdid the chief ruffian of the group.

"'The Jack of Spades is a gentleman,
And he loves to drink and play,
And he flings the dice with look that says,
What ho! let the devil pay!'"

The song, bravely begun by the master-spirit of the gang, was silenced by the same imperious person when he found that he was not suffered to officiate as prime minister. Hell-fire Dick—whom we shall hereafter call by the less offensive phrase into which his *nom de guerre* was subdued by certain of his companions—"*All*-fire Dick"—with a roar and stamp of the foot, now cried out:—

"Blast it, Joe Best, you think yourself a raal mocking-bird, and hev' such a conceit of your pipes that you don't know when to stop when you begin. Git out your pewter, old fellow, and let your pipes alone. Change is mighty scarce, boys. I'm a-wanting some. Blodgit, what money hev' you got?"

Blodgit groaned, remembering the treasure only so recently transferred to Willis Sinclair's safe keeping—groaned piteously.

"What's that grunt about! But, go 'long, Spoony, and put up the critters, and give 'em a bite; and be back as soon as you kin. We'll want you to bring out your money pouch, pretty Pete."

It was the old woman, this time, who groaned within. She, too, had heard the speech of the ruffian, and her memories were equally distressing on the subject of the lost treasure—lost, but still supposed to be in the stable, and available upon conditions.

"What! the old woman still has a tongue! Well! she

may grunt with it as much as she pleases, and we'll 'scuse it on the score of the rheumatiz. But, don't let her be talking, Pete, for as sure as thunder, if she worries our ears, we'll try the snaffle upon her!"

"The onrighteous villains!" muttered the old woman, as she heard the warning, uttered specially for her ears. "And they'd do it, too, they would! I knows 'em; and that poor mean-sperrited son of mine, would stand by and see them hitch his own mother up by the tongue, and never be the man to out-knife, and stick, right and left, to save me from it! Oh! ef I was a man!"

Here again she called to Pete, but in whining tones of entreaty, as of one suffering.

"Pete, Pete Blodgit—come in here."

"Can't, old lady," answered All-fire Dick; "He's got to see after the horses. Then he's got to bring out his shillings and continentals and l'arn how to be a gentleman by losing his money."

"He's got no money, I tell you!" cried the old woman, forgetting her subdued accents.

"No! as I'm a living sinner, I haint got no money."

And the pair groaned in sympathy together.

"Psho, boy! don't be lying! Don't we know you've been selling a smart chaince of corn and fodder, and got the shiners for it. We've got sharp eyes upon you, Pete, and must go snacks, boy. But we'll play fair. Winning aint 'thieving, 'cording to our laws and edication—and you shall have as good a chaince at *our* pouches as we have at your'n! Suppose your'n is the fullest? What of that? a purse is a purse, boys—"

"Ay, ay! That's good law!"

"And thar's as much satisfaction to a man that love's to do a thing handsome, in winning a penny as in winning a pound. 'Taint the amount that you win, Pete, that give's the satisfaction; it's the pleasure of beating one's inimy; it's the fun to beat the beater—to be the best man on the ground, and to be able to slap your sides and crow like a red-gill'd rooster—*'Coo-coo-roo-coo! Coo-coo-roo-coo-a!*" while all the rest of the crowd stands by, and don't know whether to cry or to laugh!

That's it, Pete; so don't be a sneak — and don't mind the difference twixt your pouch and mine, which is the heaviest. It's your'n now — it's mine to-morrow! What then! we've had the play, old boy; and we've done our best, and the glory's thar, Pete, though the guineas may be gone! Thanks to the stars and moon, Pete, we know you've got the gould, and that's why you see us here to-night! You don't think we'd ha' come, and troubled your 'spectable mammy, in these late hours, ef we didn't know that you'd got so much good goulden guineas, as wouldn't suffer you to have your nateral sleeps. But, fill your glass, Pete; hyar's to you; and big stakes about the board; and the jack of spades for ever!"

Pete groaned again, and the mother groaned also from within. They felt that their game was twixt hawk and buzzard. If the gold was to be wormed out of Sinclair's pockets through his heart, what should save it from such ruffians as these who now declared their knowledge of the overseer's possessions. On all sides the ruin seemed inevitable, and the ready instincts of mother and son conceived their predicament at a glance. In very despair, Pete obeyed the invitation of All-fire Dick, seized upon a cup and swallowed a heavy potation of the unadulterated Jamaica at a gulp.

"That's going it strong, Pete," quoth Skin-the-Serpent, "and shows that you're gitting your courage up for a great game."

"The sooner the better," said All-fire Dick. "And so, Pete, put up the horses and come up to the scratch."

Here Joe Best struck up a stave:—

"The horse to the rack,
And the mouth to the can,
A laughing lass, and a foaming glass,
And merry's the life of man."

"Psho! Shut up, Joe Best, you are too d—d musical for one's hearing."

All-fire Dick was something of a despot. He kept his followers in pretty tight bonds, only tolerated as they found him a profitable desperado.

"Away, Pete, with the horses, and the sooner you're back, the sooner we come to our rights. Be off.—Drive on, Serpent! made's trump! my suit, and I'll work you this time!"

Pete disappeared. The game proceeded. The old woman groaned aloud as she heard the door close behind her son, and the ruffians yelled back to her in derision. But many minutes had not elapsed, when Pete was heard again at the door.

"Whar did we hitch the critters?" he asked.

"Where did *you* hitch them, Sneak?" was the answer. "What the d—l do you mean? Can't you find them?"

"Well, I thought 'twas to the water oak; but they're not thar now."

"You're drunk, Pete—look about you! You've barked up the wrong tree. Take the lantern."

"N›! don't need! The stairs are a-shining."

Well, look about you. It's the Jamaica that blinds your eyes. Take another pull and see cl'ar.—What trumps, Sarpent? You're strong in spades, this time."

"Reckon I am! What do you say to that!"

"Brimstone! Cotch'd my jack, by the pipers. But we'll count for *game;* thar's *low!*"

Pete, meanwhile, had again disappeared; but not for long. He soon returned; this time, after making a discovery which was by no means calculated to dissipate his own disquiet, while it fully awakened that of his uninvited guests.

"The critters are all off—and look thar!"

As he spoke, he threw upon the table the four stirrups, each with a fragment of the leather, which Willie Sinclair had cut from the several saddles.

"What the h—'s that!" cried All-fire Dick, starting up, in mixed rage and consternation.

"I reckon it's the starrups of every saddle of the crowd."

There was general consternation, and a horrid confusion of tongues, as each man singled out his own.

"And whar did you find these?"

"Under the oak where I hitched the critters."

"And the horses?"

"Gone! They're off somewhar!"

"Brimstone and fire! Who the h—l have you had here to-night, Pete Blodgit? who's about?" They rushed out *en masse* as the inquiry was made.

"Nobody but Willie Sinclair!"

Blodgit made the response reluctantly; but his invention offered him no means of evasion, and a prompt answer was essential to his own safety. Had a bolt from heaven fallen that moment at their feet, it could not have confounded them more.

"Willie Sinclair!" was the unanimous exclamation, and each man griped his pistol.

"Willie Sinclair here!" cried All-fire Dick, seizing the overseer by the throat, and drawing back intuitively into the shadow of the house and out of the light of the doorway through which the candles cast a feeble gleam.

"Hark ye, you dirty skunk, ef you're playing me false, I'll slit your throat from ear to ear, in the twink of an eye!"

"I aint playing you false—it's true!"

"Why didn't you tell as Willie Sinclair was here? When was he here? Where was he hiding? Speak you eternal flea-skip before I—"

"Oh! jest loose my throat!" was the gurgling and choking speech—"and I'll tell you all! I will!"

"The truth, you rascally sneak, and nothing but the truth."

"So help me God."

"Well! out with it."

The fellow told them all, not even suppressing the facts about the buried treasure. The groans of his soul, once permitted, emptied their prison-house!

"Gimini! most on to a hundred guineas! and we've been a-fooling away the time, when we might have been filling our pockets! And he's in the stable?"

"Yes! I lock'd him up safe. Thar's the key."

"Dick! boys! Let's at him right away."

"Psho! Sarpent," replied the leader of the outlaws—"You're almost as great a fool as Blodgit. Do you expect to find Will Sinclair in the stable-loft now? Do you reckon he'd go back there, after cutting off our stirrups and turning loose the horses? He's too keen for that. He'd be as great a fool as you ef he did."

"But how did he git out?" asked "Serpent" simply enough; "when here Blodgit's got the key of the stable."

"Well, in a hundred ways. He shot back the bolt from the inside, or Blodgit forgot to lock."

"No, I didn't forgit; and the bolt's a covered one; he couldn't git at it with knife or finger."

"He has certainly got out, and done this mischief, or there's some other mimy about us! Are you sure, Blodgit, that he came alone?"

"I never seed but him. That's no telling!"

"Ten to one he had nigger 'Bram at his heels, and kept him back as a spy on Blodgit. It may be 'Bram let the horses loose."

"Then, it may be that Sinclair's still in the stable."

"We'll soon see to that! Look you, Joe Best, take Ralph Brunson with you, and look up the horses. I and Sarpent will see after Sinclair. If he's in the stable yit, I'll take the change out of him, though I have to put the lightwood splinters to the nest. See to the horses, Joe. The only wonder is he didn't cut their throats instead of the stirrups. I know that would ha' been *my* game. Come on, Sarpent. That key, Pete!"

"Mustn't I come?"

"For what? What kin *you* do? Stay here, lad, and, like a good son, tend to your 'spectable mammy. She may want you. Keep close. Keep your eyes right till we come back; for, as sure as we catch you sneaking about *us*, Pete, we'll slit *your* gullet! Do you hear? I'm jubous of you, boy! as for Sinclair and the guineas, if they're not gone, look to me to account for them. You shall have a chance, Pete."

Pete retired groaning to the cabin, where his mother provided a commentary of sufficient length and bitterness upon his "mean sperrit." The guineas were evidently gone, as regarded *their* hopes; and they now rejoiced in the belief that Sinclair had gone off with them.

"The Lord in his marcies grant that Willie Sinclair's off," groaned the old woman. "It's *his* gould and his sister's, and he's got the right to it!"

It is surprising how instinctively the feeling of honesty rises into the heart, when there is no longer a possibility of playing the rogue profitably. Mrs. Blodgit's religious feelings grew in the ascendant when the spoils of robbery were no longer within her reach. She now, for the first time, began to perceive the

full extent of the evils following the blind cupidity of herself and son.

"But it's not the loss of the gould, Pete. That's not all. But Willie Sinclair now knows all. He'll never trust you ag'in. He'll turn us out. He'll take away the keys, the corn, the fodder, the hogs, and he'll let Marion's men know that you're no better than a tory! Pete Blodgit, what a fool you was to try to cheat the man that's been the making of you! Oh! you're about the foolishest, most meansperrited critter, to be a white man, that ever lived 'twixt the Santee and the Edisto."

"Oh! mammy, you oughtn't to say that! You know you told me to, and made me give you the bag of Spanish dollars."

"And it's well I did! where'd they be now, if I hedn't! And ef you had trusted your poor old mother with the gould, as well as the silver, we'd ha' had it now, you meansperrited—"

"Hush! They're a-coming back!"

Pete hastened out of the chamber to open for the party. The horses had been found. They had employed themselves quietly in picking the long grasses about the ruined building, and were easily caught. But each was bridleless, and Joe Best and Brunson busied themselves in looking up Pete's stores of rope and leather, with the hope to provide substitutes for present use. They rightly anticipated the purpose of All-fire Dick and Skin-the-Serpent, to pursue a fugitive who carried a hundred guineas a' his girdle.

CHAPTER VII.

PURSUIT AND PASTURAGE.

We, who already know that the outlaws must be disappointed in their search after Sinclair in the stable, must not be surprised to learn that All-fire Dick and the Serpent made their approaches to that supposed fortress with the caution of old soldiers. They knew their man; and quite as well knew how formidable would be his defence, if wakeful, in such a position, armed, as he was known to be, with sword and pistols. Blodgit had also apprized them of the three muskets, and the powder and ball. He had relieved his own griefs, by telling his whole story. Their hope lay chiefly in taking Sinclair by surprise, if still in the stable; though the sagacity of the outlaws readily conceived the improbability of such a case; unless, indeed, the practice upon their steeds had been done by other hands than those of Sinclair. This was not improbable, and there was still a possibility of finding him asleep, and unsuspicious, in his nest.

They stole upon it, therefore, with the wariness of the wild-cat finding his way into the poultry-yard. Blodgit's key was well oiled, and they penetrated the stable without making the slightest noise. We need not report their progress—how they "snaked" through the stable, and "snaked" through the loft, and "went on their bellies," for their pains! Enough that, after having exercised the nicest vigilance in searching the premises, they found the nest empty—the bird flown!

"We might have known it," quoth All-fire Dick, "knowing the man, and seeing that his horse is gone."

"What's to be done?" asked the Serpent.

"Done!" was the fierce response, "why, give chase as fast as may be! Are we to lose a hundred guineas without a ride for it? He's gone, no doubt, up the road to the Barony—to his father's. There's no other route for him to take to-night. If

his horse was fresh he might push on farther—knowing we're here, and thinking we might be after him soon. It's cl'ar he had some such notion of it, by his cutting the stirrup-leathers. He's heavy loaded—powder, bullets, muskets, and gould! He'll ride slow. We must overhaul him in nine miles."

"That is, if we find the horses."

"Ay! d—n him! Look you, Sarpent, I've a most etarnal hate for that same Willie Sinclair. I hate him bekaise he's a gentleman; and he makes you feel it. I know'd him, and sarved under him once, and the very look of him made my blood bile in my veins. I've got his tracks. I've found out one of his hiding-places in Four-Hole Swamp. I tracked that big-backed fellow, Jim Ballou, thar, and know the signs. I shall track *him* thar some of these days, and 'twon't be his money that shall save him, I tell you, or his fine gentleman airs, whenever I can get a fair dig at his ribs. But that's for another time. Let's hurry off now, and start the boys."

The horses, we have mentioned, were found by the other two, greatly to the satisfaction of their leader. It was no pleasant arrangement, however, that which found them compelled to pursue without stirrups, and with plough-line bridles:—nay, hardly these—for one of the fellows rode wholly without bridle of any sort. But the evil lay mostly in the embarrassment. There was not one of the outlaws who was not quite as familiar to the horse as an Arab—who could not have ridden him fearlessly, glued, as it were, to his back—without harness of any kind. It was but to clap the knees close to his quarters, wreath a hand in a wisp of the mane, throw the body forward, and yell out like a wildcat on a *charivari*, and the pace, if a killing one, was so rather to horse than rider. Our outlaws, accordingly, though furious at the trick played on them, and the injury done to their equipments, were yet not wholly *hors du combat*. Sinclair's operations had only retarded, not prevented, the pursuit. But the delay was something gained to him, in the jaded condition of his steed, the burden which he had to carry, and the wearied state of the rider.

The outlaws allowed no unnecessary time for consultation. They were all men of prompt action, and their arrangements were soon made. When about to start, Pete Blodgit was

suddenly seen to appear on horseback among them. His resolution had been taken at the suggestion of his amiable mother, who, in the event of Sinclair being taken, was duly anxious that her son should be present at the division of the spoils. Not that she deluded herself with the idea that he could *coerce* the outlaws *into* any consideration of his claims. But something she thought might be done by whining—well knowing that, though we may brain the insolent mastiff, or the barking cur, we cast a bone to the lean hound who only looks up with pitifully pleading visage. This was now the lean hope of the innocent couple!

But All-fire Dick was not prepared to accord this one chance to the miserable Pete.

"You here! Git back to your hole. Slink, if you wouldn't taste cowhide, fasting."

"I thought you'd let me ride with you, Cappin Dick," humbly answered the sneak.

"None of your Cappin Dicks with me. I'm no cappin I'm 'Hell-fire Dick' to friends and inimies. Let you ride with us! and what good are you? Kin you fight? If you had the liver of a man would you have let Willie Sinclair strip you of every shilling? Git back to your hole before I lace you with a red riband stripe for every inch of white skin on your back."

The counsel was enforced by a couple of strokes which sent the wretch off in a twink. The next moment, with a shrill whistle, the outlaws were on the road and away.

But Pete Blodgit was not to be left behind. Spite of the terrors of cowhide, he was resolved to be in at the fleecing of the victim; and, grinning under his smarts, as well of mind as of body—for such an animal *does* suffer from a sort of shame and sense of despicableness—he pushed his horse forward, sufficiently in the rear of the pursuing party to escape their notice, yet sufficiently close to be able to overcome any interval of space, in tolerably short time, should the others be able to overhaul the fugitive. Pete had really no definite hope or object in thus joining the pursuit; but nothing short of the terrors of death could have overcome the painful fascination of the adventure. Merely to *see* the gold of which he had been

deprived—even though he should see every piece of it pass into other hands—was something better than never to gloat over it again.

He rode accordingly:—sometimes forgetting himself, and spurring eagerly ahead—then, under some prudent precautionary fear, dropping behind into a walk, and preparing to shroud himself in the bushes, should the outlaws, *par* hazard, fall suddenly back upon him.

They, meanwhile, went at the top of their speed. A wild chase, no doubt, but not without its calculations. Assuming Sinclair to have had an hour's start of them, he had covered some five miles of ground. To overtake him was possible; but they conjectured readily what would be his policy in that event. He must take to the woods; and, in his doing so, lay their better chance of securing him, since, throwing themselves between him and the Barony, cutting him off from that shelter, their game was to beat the woods, in broad daylight, until he was found. They were keen dogs for a warm scent, and did not despair of finding him by daylight. Besides, they could command the use of hounds, practised in the pursuit of men; and, even as they rode, they calculated on the necessity of sending off one of their party, by dawn, down to the kennel of Zeke Rodgers, one of their confederates, some five miles off. To anticipate Sinclair, in his attempt to gain the Barony, was their present object; and, whether they passed him on the road or not, was by no means a consideration, since the whole of the next day was before them, and they had no knowledge of military parties, anywhere about, to interfere with their pleasant pastime in the hunt. Their policy was an obvious one.

Sinclair, a man of great woodland resources, readily anticipated all these calculations of the outlaws, if once they undertook pursuit. But he calculated his own policy also. He did not push his beast beyond a trot during the hour which he had been upon the road; and, at the close of this period, he suffered him to subside into a walk. Thus quietly moving, he was better able to take in distant sounds, than if he had suffered the hoofs of his own steed to beat up the ears of silence.

Nimrod was a good walker, and the difference between his walk and jog-trot was not considerable. He had, accordingly,

compassed some eight miles of his progress, when his rider caught the sounds of pursuit upon the wind. He instantly took the woods; but not, as the pursuers anticipated, on that side of the road upon which the baronial settlement of his father lay; but the opposite. This procedure, as differing entirely from the natural suggestions in all similar cases, was designed to put the pursuit at fault. Sinclair, in the opposite woods, was unsuspected. The only disadvantage that lay in the adoption of this plan, was in the necessity which it compelled, of making a greater circuit than otherwise would have been requisite, and of exposing the fugitive, for a moment or two, out of cover, while again crossing the road to recover the region whither his flight was directed. But this necessity did not seem to involve much peril, since he could choose his own place and moment for the attempt.

Satisfied on this score, and that he was sufficiently sheltered by the dense forest in which he had taken refuge, our hero's policy now was, to suffer the pursuers to pass him, and to be sure of this fact himself. With this object, he rode his horse a hundred yards into the wood, then alighted, fastened him to a bough, and coolly took a bee-line back to the road, on the very edge of which he covered himself closely, among a clump of scrubby oaks. Here, "squat like a toad," he waited, without apprehension, the approach of the outlaws. It was only with a slight quickening of the tides about his heart, that he saw them at length heave in sight, one after the other, four dark and hurrying shadows, going at a smart canter, and whirling along without the slightest heed of the spot where he harbored. He suffered them to pass out of sight and hearing before he prepared to rise; and, just when he was about to do so, his keen ears caught the sound of another horse coming from below.

"Ha! If this should be Peyre St. Julien, now, with his troop, how we shall make the feathers of these rascals fly."

Our major of dragoons waited, still crouching in his cover, to see the approaching party. It was *not* his friend and comrade St. Julien.

"Blodgit, as I live!"

He knew him by his horse, which was unfavorably marked, in the estimation of the jockeys, by four white feet.

"Four white feet," quoth Sinclair, repeating a proverb "give him to the crows."

Blodgit passed slowly at a jog-trot. Sinclair readily conceived the secret of the latter's progress.

"They have refused to let him join them in the chase; but he hankers after his share of the guineas. Fool! they would slit his weasand before they would let him have a stiver."

Blodgit was suffered to pass out of sight also, before our fugitive rose from cover, and picked his way back to the spot where he had hitched his horse. Here, he restrapped, more securely, his sack of powder; rearranged his whole equipment; tightened his girth, reprimed his pistols; then coolly resumed his progress, using but the one precaution of moving onward, at such a depth in the cover of the woods, as to keep him from alarming any person that might happen to be watching along the road. Fortunately, the region was a familiar one; his old stamping-ground, distinguished in his memory, by many a squirrel and 'coon hunt, when a boy, and by numerous achievements of a more exciting kind, when, grown to man's estate—

> "With horse and hound, to strike the deer,
> The hunter took his way."

Confident, therefore, of his course, Sinclair proceeded as leisurely and coolly as if untroubled by any apprehension. Perfect silence brooded over his path. The cool airs of morning were freshening in the wood—the stars were lessening above, waning or stealing out of sight. The route was dark enough to render his forest progress slow; but he betrayed, and really felt, few anxieties. So perfectly assured was he of his whereabouts, that, when on a line with the great avenue of the Barony, he stopped short, and, looking about him, soon found a little Indian trail which he knew conducted to it; but he had no purpose to pursue it, and, still pushing forward, he went fully half a mile above, before he inclined once more toward the high road. When within speaking distance of it, he paused, and gathered up his several clues of thought.

"These rascals take for granted that I am harbored in the woods below. They will skirt the lower edge of the plantation, covering themselves along the skirts of the open fields and

avenue, to intercept me as I approach. Such are the probabilities. Well—well!"

And the major of dragoons drew near to the road, slowly, very slowly, with ears keenly set for the wind, and eyes peering into the solid darkness that now rose up like a wall across the route only thirty yards beyond. Thus, looking and listening, he went forward boldly, and crossed the road in safety, unseen of mortal eyes.

He found himself now in a dense forest, half a mile above the avenue, but still forming a part of the immense baronial estate of his father. He advanced into the thicket a full quarter of a mile, then turned the head of his horse downward, and made for the negro settlement. This lay on the edge of a wood, which formed an admirable physical barrier on the east, fronted an open indigo-field, in cultivation, upon the west, and by a narrow lane, between the field and the negro-houses, conducted to the mansion, and the adjacent buildings; all of which lay buried in a world of evergreens at the close of a long and noble avenue of stately forest-trees, elms, water-oaks, and pines.

Ben Bowlegs was the *driver*, or orderly-sergeant of Colonel William Sinclair, of Cherokee war memory. Ben, himself, had been through the Cherokee war, as a henchman of his master. Ben was an old soldier, accordingly, and made a first-rate plantation orderly. He had but one grand idea as a planter, and that lay in a single word; but that word, like the potent "*sesame*" of the Arabian tale, involved a large body of practical philosophy. "Push!" was the whole sum of Ben's policy. Push at the beginning, push at the middle, push at the end; be always pushing! And Ben's pushing made crops! But he did not spare himself in pushing others. Ben carried out his principles into practice. He never slept on performances *done*, as negroes and common people are very apt to do. He passed to new ones. He was a moral steam-engine, working himself, and driving every one ahead. He pushed his master, as well as his brother-slaves; and assigned *him* his tasks with the pertinacity of one who was resolved to be something more than a counsellor. His reverence for his master was never such as simply to endeavor to *please* him. Ben Bowlegs delivered the truth in

spite of consequences. Was Colonel Sinclair about to blunder? Ben interposed abruptly enough, with—

"Look yer, maussa, ef you wants to play hell wid de crop, da's jist de way for do um. Better now, you go see arter dem bloodhauns in de pastur'. Dat d—n son ob a skunk, Toby, he nebber does jussice [justice] to dem young hauss. Da's what you to see arter! Leff de crap to you driber. You kin truss *him!*"

But, thus irreverent to his old master, Ben was quite another person when dealing with the young one. His love, here, supplied the place of reverence; and his admiration was of such a sort as to deprive him of all his critical acumen, when he had to judge of young Willie's opinions and performances. We need not attempt to account for his passion for "young Mass Willie." Enough, that the fact is unquestionable. And now, to show our purpose in introducing the driver to our readers at this moment.

Ben Bowlegs, whether because of some natural aversion to the sex, or because of the mature period of sixty-two to which he had arrived, was wifeless and childless. He was perhaps, too well pleased to be a master, to suffer himself to fall under the rule of any mistress. Ben dwelt, accordingly, in single-blessedness, in a very snug cottage, that occupied a salient angle, ranging at very nearly equal distances from the negro-houses and the corn-crib. A little grove, and a small turnip-patch, separated him from the yard in which the mansion-house stood. The distance was not considerable from either of these points. Ben's wigwam stood upon pillars of pitch-pine, about three feet from the ground. You might approach it all the way from the confines of the forest under cover of sheltering evergreens. These particulars will sufficiently explain certain matters which we have now to evolve.

Well! Ben being the sole occupant of his house, it may be supposed that he slept in tolerable comfort. He usually slept well.

"Praise de Lawd!" was his occasional exclamation, "dere's no woman yer to bodder me! Bressings ob de Lawd, dere's no chillen to dribe de sleep from my eye! I kin hab my sleep when de night come, and nebber all no bud for de tree hen."

No man ever had a more profound sense of his good fortune, in these respects, than Ben Bowlegs; and no one, surely, ever more devoutly acknowledged the beneficence of Providence in affording him these sufficient causes of gratitude! Ben slept alone, slept well, and always awoke early. While his young master, Willie Sindlair, was dodging the outlaws, Ben's nose was making famous bugle-sounds in his cottage — wasting its music "on the desert air," indeed; but, without any cavilling spirit to rebuke its free privileges. Ben had, accordingly, accomplished the largest amount of necessary sleep a good hour before the dawning of the day. He was now wakeful, and meditating what was to be done that day in the fields. Touching the tobacco, there was a weeding of the weed to be done; corn — there was the last hoeing: the corn was nearly made; some earnest meditations employed him in respect to a little patch of rice; and there were sundry interests which naturally exercised the mind of our model driver, particularly as Colonel Sinclair, who was himself a very good planter, employed no overseer. It was while busy with his field and farmyard problems, that Ben Bowlegs was suddenly startled into a new consciousness, by a certain mysterious rapping upon the floor beneath him. He listened and rubbed his eyes. The rapping was repeated.

"Lawd Gimini! it's young maussa!"

He jumped out of bed in a twinkle, stooped to the floor, raised the section of a plank, and our major of dragoons slowly shot up, from a rather humble posture, into his full height, and scrambled deftly into the apartment. It was very evident that the major and the driver had been at the same mysterious play before. Ben caught his master's hand joyfully, and shook it with a fiercely-loving gripe.

"Grad for see you, Mass Willie — no look for you dis time, but mighty grad for see you! T'ink you bin gone wid de sodgers up into de mountains. But grad for see you yer. Grad for tell you, sir, all's well yer, 'cept de ole colonel, dat's got de debbil and all-fire in his foot ag'in! But Miss Carrie's like a rose in de morning, and little Lottie is anoder leetle rose in de morning; and ebbry passon dat you cares to yer 'bout is most astonishing, charming well, 'cept, as I say, de ole colonel.

and de fire in he foot makes him bile ober ebbry now and den, and it's mighty hard for a 'spectable gentleman to stan' him when he's in his ondecent passion! And how's *you*, Mass Willie? How's you bin? Lord delibber me, but it does seem as ef you was nebber to be done growing. You're a foot taller, I'm a-t'inking, than when you went off in de spring!"

And Ben the Bowlegged wheeled the young major about, making due presentation of him to every point of the compass, until he had satisfied himself that, in growing taller, his young master had lost nothing of that symmetry which had rendered him perfect in his eyes before.

"Well, Ben; as well as a man can be who has the appetite of forty Indians always, and not often the meat to satisfy one sufficiently."

"Lawd bless you, dat's wha' I says to myself, ebbry time I sets down to my dinner—I says, Lawd, ef I could only gee Mass Willie a bit ob dis bacon, or a plate ob dis rice, or a wing ob dis chicken, or a dozen ob dese eggs, or a bowl ob dis coffee, or sometʼing or udder, sich as I has a-hissing and a-smoking before me; wha' ebber I hab for my own eating dat day!"

"Thank you for your good intentions, Ben, and I'm sure your dinner would be a thousand times far more grateful than what we commonly get—the best of us—in camp."

"Lean beef—carrion, I may call um—skin and bone; sometimes no beef at all—notʼing better dan bile hom'ny—"

"Ay, indeed, Benny; and sometimes horse-beef, old fellow, such as my father had to eat, when you went with him, in the old Cherokee war."

"It's a most amassiful life, Mass Willie, to be a sodger; and I tinks ob de bad libing for you ebbry day. But you'll hab sometʼing better to-day, please God! and ebbry day you hab for stay wid us."

"Not long, Ben! Camp duties can't suffer me to delay even where the beef is excellent; and you well know that so long as this war lasts, I am not likely to be met, coming home, with my father's smiles."

"Da's true, Mass Willie," answered the other with a sigh. "De ole gentleman's jest as foolish and onsensible as ebber; and jest now, wid de debbil and all fire, burning in his foot.

and de troubles we'be been having wid some of dese outlying rascals in de swamp—butchering de cattle, and robbing de poultry-yard—he's biling ober, I may say, wid all sort ob onreasonable vexations."

"What! have the tories been at work upon your cattle, Ben?"

"Well, sir, I'm a-tinking dat it's as much whigs as tories. When cattle-tieving's the business, and henroost-robbing, there ain't much difference, I'm a-tinking, among sodgers. Dey're all alike—whigs and tories, king's men and people's men; de fac' is, Mass Willie, de very sight ob a fat steer, or a clebber young heifer, naterally, I may say, turns an honest sodger into a tief!"

"Take care, Ben. If the soldier should hear you uttering any such sentiments?"

"I mus' utter dem, Mass Willie, kaise, you see, it's de onnateral, Christian truts, I'm a-telling. Ebbry ole sodger is bound to tief chickens and cattle when de chaince is good for clearing out a henroost, or knocking a young steer on de head. Dey've been at dis work yer at de Barony, a leetle too often ob late to please de ole mawssa; and he all but bile ober when he hears ob it, and feels de fire in his foot dat keeps him from mounting horse, and dribing de swamp for de rapscallions."

"And he curses the whigs accordingly?"

"Dat he does! He says it's all owing to de friends of liberty. Den he cusses de liberty, and den he grunts and says—'And my own son! my own son! He to take up arms ag'in his king and country, to help dese rapscallions!' But he don't cuss *you*, Mass Willie—no! no! he don't *zackly* do dat!"

"I am grateful for that, Benny—very grateful; but I'm afraid he comes monstrous nigh to doing so, when he's boiling over."

"Well, I reckon he would, Willie Sinclair—I reckon he would, ef 'twan't for an angel, dat just den light down close by his shoulder, and puts he arms round he neck, and looks inter he face jest so, with sich a smiling and sich a weeping in her eyes, and sich sweet words upon her mouth, and kisses too, dat his heart gets weakly and saft, and she stops de cusses on his lips; and he stops biling over, and forgits de British and de

whigs and de tories—forgits everyting but jest what de blessed white angel happens to say so saftly in his ears. Ah! Mass Willie, dat's a bressed critter, to be a woman, dat same gal child, Carrie Sinclair."

"Dear Carrie!" exclaimed the major of dragoons, while he involuntarily grasped the old negro's hand; and a silent tear suddenly gathered in his eye, bright and clear, as a pearl of ocean thrown up by the billows, and left upon the beaten shore in the smiles of an evening sunset. "Dear Carrie!" murmured the youth. "But you remind me, Benny. I must hurry to her and to the house, Benny, before the day opens broadly upon us."

"It's about day-breaking now, Mass Willie."

"Then you must stir yourself, old fellow, and see to my horse, and see to the bundles on his back. Put away the sack of powder and the bullets in the old hiding-place, and see that you hide my horse also. He must not go into the stables. In fact, it must not be known on the plantation that I am here. I must see Carrie; but I do not know that I shall let my father suspect my presence. I am pursued, Benny, and the plantation is even now under the close watch of 'Hell-fire Dick,' and a portion of his gang."

"Hell-fire Dick! He 'bout yer ag'in! Da's de same rapscallion dat's been feeding 'pon we cattle. I sure ob it!"

"Yes! likely enough. He is certainly here. I have seen him this night. I have also found out that scamp, Pete Blodgit—"

"Enty I bin always tell you, Pete Blodgit's a great rapscallion, and no better dan a scamp?"

"I know it now! But I have laid him bare. The scoundrel would have taken my life, could he have mustered courage for it."

"He no hab de heart, Mass Willie. He's a coward an' a rapscallion. Ha! le' me put finger on 'em."

"We may have a chance, Benny, to put the whole hand upon him, and a few other of these rascals. They were all on my track to-night; and are now harboring about the avenue, and skirting the lower woods. They, no doubt, believe me to be still below, and are watching there for my approach. I took

the opposite woods, got above the Barony, and came down by Henderson's old cattle-pen. It is my plan now, to lie still, not to be seen or suspected as having reached the Barony; for we know not what these rascals would have the audacity to attempt, now that they believe that all the troops, British and American, are above at Ninety-Six. If they were sure of my presence here, they might even attempt to sack the Barony, since they know that I have a considerable sum of money with me."

"Wha! dey 'tack de Barony? Le' 'em try! Enty ole maussa yer, and you yer, and *me* yer; and der's some sebben or eight ob we brack people dat ain't 'f'aid [afraid] ob de music when de bullets fly; and day will fight like bressed varmints, jest whenebber maussa say de wurd. Den we hab gun and pistol and swode; and enty you hab powder and bullet on de hoss? Le' me gone for 'em right away!"

"Do so, Benny; but first go and waken up little Peter, and let him open the house-door to me, so that I can't be kept waiting outside where I may be seen. And bring Tiger with you, so that I may renew my acquaintance with him *here*, lest he should fly out upon me, and alarm the neighborhood with his barking."

"I gone, maussa."

Soon, the faithful negro reappeared, bringing the powerful watchdog, an animal with a cross of the English bull upon the Irish wolf-dog, broad bullet-head, lion neck, ample chest, short, well-sinewed legs, and a short hair that lay smooth, and always looking moist, close to his skin. The fierce beast leaped to the caresses of his young master, with a loving whine, knowing him at a glance. Together, the two, the major and the dog, stole away to the dwelling, while Ben proceeded to put his young master's horse, and the several burdens which he bore, in several places of security.

CHAPTER VIII.

CUPID AND CUPIDITY.

Our major of dragoons found no impediment in effecting his entrance into the dwelling. He was met at the door and welcomed by little Peter, who stood in waiting, his eyes not fairly opened, and his consciousness but partially excited. *Little* Peter was a fellow more than six feet high: but his growth, however great, never enabled him to outgrow the diminutive epithet which hailed his puny advent into life. The *little* stuck to him even when he had grown into a giant. *His* world, not unlike that of most great men, was tenacious of the disparaging epithet by which his greatness stood rebuked; and seemed resolved never to recognise a growth which exposed so completely the absurdity of their premature judgment in his case. Neither the negro nor the white world is pleased, at any time, to acknowledge that its sagacity has been at fault, in failing to conceive the great capabilities of its own members, while they are yet only in the gristle.

Though only half awake, little Peter grasped his young master's hand with an unction which showed that the boyish relations of the two had been equally pleasant and familiar; and our major of dragoons requited the gripe in a way to satisfy all the social sympathies in the negro's heart.

"Berry grad for see you, Mass Willie. Grad you come. Exceedant berry grad for see you."

"Thank you, Peter; and I am glad to see you! Why, boy, are you never to stop growing? You are half a head taller than your master. Are you not ashamed to grow so tall?"

Peter answered with a satisfied grin.

"Now, Peter, remember one thing. You are not to say a word to any living soul about my being here—not even to your wife! Do you hear that, Peter?"

"Hah Bress God, Mass Willie, I ain't got no wife yit! Hope for hab one some day, and ef you be so good, Mass Willie, to say de good wud for me to Miss Carrie, and mek 'em le' me hab Congaree Polly, wha' wait on em——"

"Well, why shouldn't you have Congaree Polly, if you are both willing?"

"Das wha' I say, maussa."

"She's not too good for you, Peter—certainly not too handsome."

"Congaree Polly mighty good looking gal, maussa."

"Then she has undergone a marvellous improvement, Peter, like yourself. But, if you are satisfied, so am I; and I will report your wishes to my sister. But I remember Congaree Polly only as one of the most awkward creatures on the plantation, and wondered that Carrie took her into the house."

"Polly mighty smart and scrumptious, Mass Willie."

"I don't doubt the 'scrumptious,' Peter, and it may be that she has acquired the 'smart' too; but the beauty is quite another thing. However, if you really wish to be a married man, and she suits you, there can be no objection; provided she makes none. I will let my sister hear of it. In the meantime, Peter, do yda remember that I am to be here in secret—nobody is to know, not even Congaree Polly, unless she gets the fact from myself or my sister; and that she will do, only because the matter can not well be kept from her. A secret never improves its complexion by unnecessarily uncovering its head. Lock your door again, Peter. Let Tiger remain with me for a while. He will be quiet here."

And the negro proceeded about his house affairs; and the major of dragoons, followed closely by Tiger, passed into the interior of the house with quiet footsteps, and a degree of confidence, which showed both parties to be equally familiar with all its recesses. Sinclair, wearing Indian boots—moccasins and leggins of buckskin—awoke no echoes by his tread; and the feet of Tiger, as if emulous of his master's stealthy progress, were set down as if he trod on velvet. The major passed the chamber in the upper story, in which his father slept, with increased caution of movement; and went on rather hurriedly to

that which his sister occupied, at the end of the passage. Tapping at the door lightly, he was promptly heard within.

"Who is that—Polly?" was asked, in the well-remembered accents of his sister. Another tap answered her, and a whistle through the keyhole, which she readily recognised.

"Willie! Can it be Willie?" were the words which distinctly reached the ears of the major. He whistled again, and then the voice whispered to him through the keyhole:—

"Wait a moment, Willie, till I throw on my gown."

He had not long to wait. The door was soon opened, and the brother and sister were instantly wrapped in a loving embrace; and little Lottie (Charlotte), a girl of ten years, followed for her embrace also; and, for a few moments, the joy of the meeting, after a long interval of absence and danger, kept all the parties from the expression of their feelings in speech. Meanwhile, we must not omit to mention that Carrie Sinclair was a tall fresh beauty of the *blonde* order, and little Lottie was very much like her;—"with a difference" of course. Both had very fair complexions, and very long, silken, brown hair, and Carrie had large swimming blue eyes, and a soft, small delicious mouth, that seemed gushing with red blood, even as an Indian peach whose cheeks you have parted with an eager knife. Willie Sinclair watched the two, perused them, we may say, with almost the fondness of a lover. And very precious indeed were they to his love. The ties of affection which united their hearts were of the tenderest sort, such as had never been sundered, or even shocked, for a single instant, from the happy hours of their innocent childhood to the present moment.

And few words were spoken for a delicious interval. They were content to gaze into each other's eyes, and to feel the pressure of each other's hands. The dialogue was murmured rather than spoken.

"Oh! Willie, I am so happy that I see you again, and safe, and well!"

"And I am so happy when I get back to the Barony, and find you without change, Carrie."

"And you have come now to stay with us, Brother Willie?" said little Lottie.

He shook his head, while he took the child into his arms.

"But a little while, Lottie. War suffers no long repose to the soldier."

"But the wars will soon be over, Brother Willie. Papa says that the king's troops will beat your soldiers out of the country."

"I hope not, Lottie, and think not!—and so,"—turning to Carrie, "so, he has a touch of the gout at this moment?"

"Yes, a pretty severe one too."

"A bad season for showing myself before him, Carrie."

Carrie looked anxious, but she did not answer; and, after a brief pause, she contrived to send Lottie out of the apartment; the major warning the child that she was, on no account, or to anybody, to mention that he was in the house."

"Not to papa, Brother Willie?" asked the child.

"Not even to papa, little Lottie. Leave me to do that myself, when the time comes."

The child, rewarded by another kiss from her brother, disappeared, and, with her departure, the dialogue became more free between the elder sister and the brother.

"Whether I shall show myself at present to my father, Carrie, must depend upon your report. His gout will add to the embarrassments between us, and the difficulty of avoiding painful language. He is, I fear, but little reconciled; and the absurd notion that he entertains, that our cause is failing, will make him more unreasonable and unreasoning. The relief of 'Ninety-Six,' the retreat of Greene before Rawdon, the arrival of new troops, three fresh regiments from Ireland, all of which he probably knows, have contributed, no doubt, to fortify him in his convictions that our cause is well nigh prostrated."

"Such is, certainly, the case, Willie," said the sister, with a mournful shake of the head. The brother continued:—

"He does not know, as yet, perhaps, that Rawdon has, in turn, been compelled to retreat; that 'Ninety-Six' has been evacuated almost as soon as relieved; that the Irish troops can not be trusted; and that the partisans are every day increasing in number, in spirit and confidence, and, under new leaders, hitherto unknown, are starting up, on all sides, like the armed men, from the teeth of the dragon! In brief, my dear Carrie, our cause in Carolina was never so prosperous in prospect before

We have passed our darkest day. We are about to enjoy the new dawn."

"Not a word of this does he know, and, I may say, Willie, that, in his present conditions and mood, not a word is he likely to believe. He thinks the triumph of the British arms certain; and was, only yesterday, making it a subject of discussion — I suppose chiefly to worry me — whether, it became him, as a true subject, and as an honorable man, to interfere with a petition to Lord Rawdon, in your behalf, in anticipation of your captivity, trial and doom, as a traitor."

The major of dragoons laughed merrily.

"Why this is worse than ever, Carrie. The supposed successes of the British arms ought rather to put him in better humor."

"So it would, Willie, no doubt, had it not been for the discovery which he has lately made of your visits to a place on the Edisto, called Holly-Dale."

"Hah!" was the sudden exclamation of the major, while a warm suffusion passed over his cheeks. The sister beheld this, and said reproachfully:—

"Ah! Willie, there is a secret you have kept from me?"

"Not willingly. Not with any purpose of concealment, dear Carrie. I meant that you should know all in season. But tell me —what has my father heard, and from whom? Who has been here?"

"Your man, Ballou, was here, and I think that something dropped from him that led father to suspect. Afterward, there came a certain Captain Travis, an elderly person——"

"Ah!—indeed! He here?"

"Who, it seems, is the proprietor of Holly-Dale."

"What did he come for?"—hastily.

"I did not learn; but father and himself were closeted together for a couple of hours. I saw them when they first met in the hall. They seemed to have known each other before."

"They served together in the Cherokee war."

"It was very evident to me that father did not like the man, nor did I!—he seemed a sly, selfish, fawning sort of person, with a mean carriage, a sinister look, and a stealthily cat-like motion."

"A true picture—too true!"

"When he was gone—and I was not present when he went—I found father full of rage and indignation. He spoke of this Captain Travis, as a mean, money-loving miser, who was more than suspected of peculation in the commissary department during the Cherokee war."

The cheek and brow of the major again flushed and reddened, and he rose from his seat, and paced the room. His sister paused and watched him. He returned to his seat after an effort, and said quietly—

"Go on, Carrie, with your story."

"'Did you mark that fellow, Carrie?' said my father to me on my return to the room, when the guest had departed,—'did you mark his mean, avaricious aspect, his ratlike avidity of expression, his catlike, stealthy movements,—the hateful cunning in his eyes, the sly, sneaking insinuating tones of his voice,—the utter baseness in everything about him?'"

"Well! go on," said the major, looking gloomy.

"Such was his question. Of course, I said as little as possible, seeing his humor, and knowing nothing about the person, who—I really felt—was anything but prepossessing in appearance. 'That fellow,' he continued, 'has made a fortune by peculation. He has large estates—lands, negroes, and I suppose money. But he is a scoundrel—and knows that I know him to be one! I spurned him, as such, when we served together among the Cherokees; and, but for that rebellious son of mine, he never would have dared to show his face in my house! Well! this wretch, this reptile, has the audacity, under the sanction of my own blood—my own son—to come here and propose an alliance with my family. What do you think of that?' said he."

"I never gave any such sanction:—I never authorised any such proposal:—I never spoke one syllable to Captain Travis on the subject."

Such was the hasty speech of the Major of Dragoons.

"Oh! I'm so glad, Willie, to hear you say so!"—exclaimed Carrie—"for, of a truth, brother, I have rarely seen father in such a passion as he was put by the proposals of this person. It brought on him this last attack of gout. Oh! if you can only

tell him that you never authorized this person—that you have no idea of the young woman, his daughter——"

"Alas! sister mine, I can say no such thing!" answered the youth, with an effort to speak gayly. "I can say that I sanctioned none of Captain Travis's proceedings—that I authorized him to speak for me in nothing! But I confess to you, Carrie, my love, that I have a serious idea of his daughter; and that though I have no sympathy with the father—nay, think of him very much as our father does,—yet I should welcome an alliance with his daughter, as one of the most grateful of all mortal acquisitions."

"Can it be possible, brother, that you would marry into such a low family?"

"I do not marry the family! Besides, Carrie, the family is *not* low! The mother was a Fergusson of St. Thomas's, and a fine woman. The daughter is as noble and sweet a creature as may be found anywhere between the Peedee and the Savannah. She will do no discredit to any family in the country; and, once for all, hear it from me, Carrie, I shall never be the man to sacrifice the best feelings of my own heart, and the best claims in the heart and form of woman, to the prejudices of caste and society, which perpetually fluctuate in position, and just as frequently exhibit baseness as nobility, in the elements which they foster, and upon which they pride themselves!"

"But you surely, Willie, acknowledge the claim of caste and society?"

"To be sure I do, Carrie; but not when they err, and do wrong to claims which are not less legitimate than their own! I'll tell you where they err, Carrie; in their inflexible resolve never to recognise those exceptional cases which are rightly acknowledged always, as such, even when we obey the rule. Caste and class properly pride themselves upon the habitual refinements of mind and moral, acquired in long periods of time. This constitutes their just claim to authority; and they rightly hold themselves aloof from associations with other classes, who do not know, and do not properly value these refinements. But there is, here and there, a natural nobility in individuals, which overrides the law, and demands recognition. There are persons to whom refinement is *native*—who are *born* nobles—delicate

and just in sentiment, magnanimous in soul, generous in courage, endowed with noble talents, and devoted to noble purposes. It is the duty of an aristocracy to acknowledge all such persons, as soon as found, and take them lovingly into their embrace, and seek to do them honor; and there is a twofold wisdom in doing so, since we thus add to our own resources of society, and increase our influence upon mankind at large. But classes are apt to show themselves too jealous of position, and too slow to recognise these occasional claims of the individual. The consequence is that they make him hostile; and he will bring his natural powers to bear against them — will expose their weaknesses, and revenge upon them his own hurts of self-esteem — an injustice that always avenges itself upon the wrong-doer, and, in the end, we pay a double penalty; forced not only, at last, to acknowledge the claims to which we unwisely opposed ourselves at first, but to pay them tribute also, and to submit to an authority which becomes exacting and despotic in proportion to the tenacity with which it has been resisted and denied. No one, more highly than myself, esteems the claims of social caste. It is a natural condition, and rightly possesses authority; but, God forbid! that I should sullenly and sternly reject the occasional individual, whose personal claims put him above his condition in society! He has received from nature his badges of nobility, and society is simply ridiculous when it opposes itself to the credentials which come patent from the hands of God himself! Be assured that, in all such conflicts, the class refusing to acknowledge the individual only proves itself unworthy, and perils all the securities upon which it prides itself."

"And is this young lady so attractive — so refined and intellectual, Willie?"

"I am a lover, Carrie, you know, and may be held to be somewhat blind, and somewhat extravagant; but, making all allowance, for that amiable insanity which sees nothing but perfection in the creature whom it loves, I am free to declare that I hold Bertha Travis to be one of the most gentle, pure, refined, and beautiful creatures that was ever born under the blessed vault of heaven!"

Carrie took the hand of her brother into her own, and, smiling sweetly, said —

"How I long to see and know her! Bertha! It is a pretty but an unfamiliar name. It is a pity, if one so beautiful, gentle, and well-endowed, should be scorned because of her family."

"She shall *not* be scorned, Carrie, by me, or by any whose respect I can compel," answered the major of dragoons, with the air of a man who had long been exercised in the freedom of a perfect will. He continued—

"I am sorry that the matter has been prematurely broken to my father. This is not the time for it. And why Captain Travis should have broached it, just now, I can not so well divine. He had not only no authority from me to speak of it, but I have never once spoken with him about it; indeed, between the father and myself there has been no cordial intimacy. But he is a shrewd politician, and there are signs in the horizon for which I suppose him to be preparing. There are, indeed, certain influences acting upon him, which he either can not resist, or the conflict with which he would escape. He would, I fancy, cheerfully ally himself with our family, in the hope to acquire equal position and security. This movement proves that *he* sees the decline of the British power!"

"Father spoke of him as one who really cared nothing for either party, or as inclining rather to the American cause, but driving a good trade under favor of the British."

"I believe it; and the question with him now, is, under which play can he be most secure, while realizing the most profits? The question leads to other influences, which do not leave him quite as free as he could wish to be. He has some entanglements—has some dangerous secrets abroad in other hands—and there is one whom he well knows would sacrifice him without scruple, and destroy him with the British, unless he can pacify him. This person is *my* danger also—my black dog, that haunts me with a fear. In brief, Carrie, this person is my rival!"

"Ah! for the affections of Bertha?"

"Precisely! And you can now conjecture the motive of Captain Travis in broaching to my father the subject of an alliance with his house."

"I do not see, Willie."

"Simply, then, there is a certain Richard Inglehardt, a can-

tain of loyalists, who is a suiter for the hand of Bertha. Captain Travis would rather that she should ally herself with our family than with his, since his origin is rather humble. But Inglehardt has, I suspect, found the secret of Travis's dealings with both parties. The positive rejection of his suit, by Travis, would lead to the ruin of the latter. To save himself, he would unite with our people, if we would guaranty him protection. An alliance with me, he thinks, would secure it for him. To arrange for this object, has been, I suspect, the cause of his visit to my father. He has wished to sound and feel his way. He is eminently cautious and cunning. What he has said I can only conjecture; but, in all probability, not suspecting my father's loyalty, or the intensity of it, he has too freely shown his hand; an indiscretion to which my father's reserved demeanor—the consequence of his dislike for the man—has probably driven him. Now, Travis sees, as well as anybody, the precarious condition of British power in the country. He is preparing accordingly. He has shown his opinions, on this subject, to my father, who, of course, thinks nothing of the kind; and the result has been the explosion which you heard.

"And this Richard Inglehardt; what sort of person is he? Have you any reason to think that Bertha——"

She paused. The question she was about to ask might be a disquieting, as it was a delicate one.

"Ah! my black dog! Well, let me do the scoundrel justice. He is a scoundrel, but one whom you must respect for the strength that is in him. He is a good-looking fellow; dark of feature, with long, wild, black hair, glossy and rich; eyes intensely keen and piercing, but of icy coldness; of good, well-made figure, and graceful; quiet and subdued of manner; slow and circumspect; mild and amiable of demeanor; but savage, selfish, of a bloody recklessness of mood, who keeps no faith with any when his own policy seems to counsel falsehood, and one who is as tenacious of pursuit as the devil of his victim. Mentally, he is shrewd, quick, keen, and though but imperfectly educated, yet ready and intelligent. He is a person whose hostility compels great caution, if not fear. He is a good soldier, commands a smart company of rangers, and is brave enough, and bold enough, whenever he finds his profit in it

He has known Bertha Travis from childhood. His father was a small Dutch farmer in the same neighborhood."

"Truly, Willie, a formidable rival. But she—Bertha—how does she like him? Does she incline to either, Willie?"

"Ah! Carrie, you will know it all, I see! Well, then, I may tell you, once for all, that I have no longer cause to fear with her. She is mine, Carrie—mine!".

And Carrie laughed delightedly, as she again flung her arms round her brother's neck, and kissed him.

"And now, Carrie, let me throw myself upon your bed, and snatch a couple of hours' sleep. That will suffice, and bring us to your breakfast-hour. I have much more to tell you, but must not begin now. I must sleep, child, now, or I shall be only half able to do the work that is before me. See that you keep fast the door, and, for the present, keep as secret as possible the fact that I am here. Much depends on it.'

CHAPTER IX.

FAITH AND BREAKFAST.

For two hours exactly, did Willie Sinclair sleep. He was wrapped in slumber as soon as he had laid himself down, and awoke at the designated time of limitation. Such is the result of military habit. Sleep when you can, and wake always when you will! Carrie was absent when he awakened, and he had time to perform his ablutions before she reappeared. At her return it was very natural that she should resume the subject of his wooing, and of the damsel he had won. When was a little bit of domestic history, having for its theme a love burden, ever an ungrateful subject in youthful ears? But, in Carrie Sinclair's case, it was the curiosity of a loving sister that sought for his secret, and not an idle brain, or a silly fancy; and she welcomed all his confidences with a genial love. The natural satisfaction, nay, exultation, which he had displayed in revealing his triumph, in the story of his successful wooing, was fondly encountered by the sympathies of his sister. Carrie Sinclair had no such prejudices as filled her father's bosom, against the *caste* of the family in which her brother found his sweetheart. At all events, her prejudices were not deep-rooted, and constituted a sentiment rather than a feeling or a principle. She readily believed that the lady whom Willie had chosen was worthy to be her sister; and all the social barriers which she fancied had really existed between her family and that into which he proposed to marry, were dissipated by a breath. She took Willie's hand into her own, and pressing it fondly, exclaimed:—

"I must know her, Willie. I feel that I shall love her very much. How can I else than love the woman whom you love? But it will be a long struggle before you can overcome the prejudices of papa. You don't know how angry the report

made him, how bitterly he spoke of Bertha, and you, and Captain Travis. He has such a bad opinion of him, that I fear it will be impossible to reconcile him to the match."

"Never you fear, Carrie! Our good father is violent rather than steadfast. He blazes out into a passion, yet very soon forgets the passion; and where a passion is unreasonable, or where it is founded on an error, it is very apt to burn out very soon in such a nature as his. Besides, when he once knows Bertha——"

"But how is he to know her, Willie? How are we to meet?"

"The world is always in motion, Carrie, and opportunity stands at every man's elbow, sometime or other. You don't suppose this war is to last for ever, Carrie?"

"I don't know. It seems so, Willie! New troops from England, and——"

"The war is nearly burnt out now. These new troops are all that England has to send; and these are Irish wholly, whom the officers here can hardly trust! The English people are even more tired of the war than we. It has exhausted them; and they now *feel*, what they could not *see*, at the beginning of the conflict, that what they might have gained by preventing our Independence, is more than balanced by what they lose in the sacrifice of our trade. I doubt if the war can last another year. It would require some time to explain to you why I think so, and this is not necessary. Besides, I have other matters to tell about, of more immediate interest. I have not told you, Carrie, that I have been chased hither this morning."

"Chased, Willie, by whom?"

"By some of the most blood-thirsty ruffians of all the refugee tories in the country. I was at Pete Blodgit's last night. I have found that scoundrel out! He has been robbing us at a fearful rate; forgetting all his obligation to us; was selling everything, and hiding away the money! But I made the rogue disgorge; and, but that I was vigilant, I might have been brained with a billet for my pains."

"Impossible! What, Blodgit, for whom we have done so much!—whose mother we have fed, and nursed, and provided for, as one of our own family?"

"Ay, and who would have requited us, for all, after a very Christian fashion, by counselling her hopeful son to cut my throat! I have found them both out."

Here he told the much-wondering damsel all the story as it is already known to us. At the close, he laid before her the gold, the sight of which had proved so fatal to the virtues of Dame Blodgit and her son.

"Half of the gold is yours, Carrie."

"Keep it, Willie. I have no use for it."

"No! Do you keep it; and should *I* have use for it, I will know where to look. Keep secret that you have it, for the possession of gold is a rare danger at this juncture; particularly as the Barony is so poorly guarded;—my father laid up with gout, and myself absent! There are little squads of scoundrels all about the country, who will attempt anything desperate with such a temptation in their eyes. Our father's relations with the British secure him with *them*, while *my* connection with our side affords him similar security with *us*. But the refugees, whig and tory, are not to be restrained by either party, when they find an opportunity for plunder; and your best security now, is to conceal all objects of temptation."

"They are plundering us now."

"Of cattle, I know; but this must be endured. In fact, I shall have to do a little of this business of cattle-plundering upon the Barony, myself. But say nothing on this head—I do not know, indeed, but that your recent losses have been by our own people. At present, however, it is just as well that our father should suppose the diminution of his fat steers to be due altogether to the friendly aid of his loyalist connections. And now, Carrie, better see to your house affairs. It is time for our father to be stirring. See to him, and leave me here. Keep from him the fact that I am here—for the present, at least. I suppose it not likely that he will ask *after* me."

"He speaks of you often enough, Willie."

"But not lovingly, Carrie."

"Yes, indeed, for he speaks angrily."

"Ah! then there is hope."

"Oh! yes, Willie; let the war but end, and all will be forgotten."

"Ah! indeed! And he chuckles with the idea that his interposition then will alone save me from the gallows; and this he fancies, will bring me to my knees! He dreams still as fondly as ever of the final triumph of the king?"

"That he does; and you would be surprised to hear him argue it out and prove it. To hear *him* first, and *you* afterward, I am left in a condition of perfect bewilderment. You are both so equally certain, and so satisfactory, that I believe neither of you. Not knowing where to steer, I am thus kept afloat, like a ship under opposing winds, sent to and fro, and never finding port or rest."

The major of dragoons laughed.

"Drop anchor, then, and take in sail, and let the winds exhaust themselves against each other. I shall see our father before I depart; that is, if I observe anything to encourage me to seek an interview; and then you may judge for yourself as to the respective force of the opposing currents. Meanwhile, that I may be justified for not showing myself just yet, you are to remember that these refugees are about the premises. That sneaking scoundrel Blodgit is with them, no doubt; and he knows the place too well not to render it highly probable that he will be prying about. I wish them to remain in doubt as to my presence here. This will cause delay, and keep them in the precinct."

"And why do you wish that, Willie?"

"For a reason, Carrie, in which you, I fancy, have a certain interest. I look to see Peyre St Julien here, in twelve hours! Bless me, Carrie, child, how your face reddens!"

"And why should my face redden, I'd like to know?"

"Nay, that's what *I'd* like to know! Explain!"

"Really, Willie, you are looking monstrous wise of a sudden."

"And you monstrous foolish! Fie, fie, Carrie, to try to keep such a secret from your brother, from your own Willie, who has always opened his heart to you, the moment he became conscious of having a single sensation in it." He had forgotten his own secret, and she was too much flurried to think of the obvious retort.

"Oh! Willie, I have never shut mine against you! Only—"

"Only in this instance, Carrie, when the bird you had caged in it was quite too precious to be exposed to any eyes."

"No! no! brother! It was I that told Peyre to tell you all. I did, indeed, Willie."

"Go! go! You are a foolish child! And why should you not have told me all *yourself?*"

"I don't know; I tried to do so when we parted last, but somehow—"

"Your heart failed you! Well, I suppose you have not ventured to be more communicative with our father than with me. He does not know how greatly Peyre St. Julien wishes to soar, does he?"

"No, indeed! How could I tell him?"

"Ah! Carrie! what a cruel fate is ours! That we should both run counter to all our papa's wishes. That we should both love where he would prefer to hate. That we should do those things that, in his creed, we are criminal to do; and leave those things undone which he holds essential to his proper religion! What an explosion there will be when he finds out *your* secret. Mine was nothing to it; for *you* were always his pet, Carrie; the apple of his eye—so perfect too—ha! ha! ha! Poor Carrie, when he finds *you* out!"

"Oh, don't speak of it, Willie; pray don't."

"How demure it makes you look!"

"Yes, Willie, it makes me very sad! to think how well he loves me, and that I dare not tell him all."

He took her proudly in his arms and kissed her.

"Be of good cheer, Carrie! all will come right. Have *faith*, child—what's love without faith and will? I have both. I love, and nothing doubt that I shall get the woman whom I love! True, there are impediments, but I will overcome them; rivals, but I will foil them; hostile papas, but I will soothe them. I may have to fight for my wife, and I mean to do it, as soon as the necessity shows itself for fight! But, this is one of the very groundworks of my faith. It is assured, by my own will to do all that is essential to the acquisition of its object! and I will fight for your little heart too, my Carrie, so never despond! Have faith, child,—and, away now and see after your papa's and your brother's breakfast."

"But when, Willie, do you say, that St. Julien is coming?" asked Carrie, as she peeped obliquely at the mirror.

"Oh! you shall have ample time to make your toilet. Get you gone now, before the old man grows impatient."

The damsel disappeared. The brother remained alone. He seized the occasion to attend to his own toilet; a duty which he found very grateful of performance. This done, he was joined suddenly by our quondam friend, Little Peter, who opened the door cautiously, but without hesitation, and appeared, bringing in a covered basket, the contents of which, smuggled from the pantry, made the sufficient and palatable breakfast for our major of dragoons.

"Breck'us, Mass Willie," said Little Peter. Sinclair laughed out to see the disproportion between the large negro and the little basket:—the giant doing the duty of the dwarf. Peter laughed, also, from sympathy, never once suspecting the occasion of his young master's merriment.

"Peter, you must find that basket very heavy."

"No heabby 'tall, Mass Willie. Chile kin carry 'em."

Then, as the fellow caught the glance of his master's eye, he understood the ridicule, and, setting down the basket hurriedly, as if it were a snake, he forced himself into a second chuckle.

"And how's your master this morning, Peter?"

"Hah, Mass Willie!—ole maussa hab de fire in he foot. He's in berry bad sperrits dis morning—kin do not'ing but cuss and eat!"

"He has an appetite then, Peter?"

"Always kin eat when he cuss! He eat and cuss; and he dunno how much he eat and cuss!"

"You ought to tell him, Peter."

"Ki! Mass Willie; me tell ole maussa, how much he cuss and eat!" And the negro laughed fairly at the insanity of the suggestion.

"Well, Peter, let us see what you have for breakfast; for I too, have an appetite. Spread out your commodities, and clear out. You will be wanted behind your master's chair whenever he feels the necessity to swear!"

Peter grinned understandingly, as he obeyed the order to spread out the breakfast; then made a respectful bow, as saying, "all's ready;" but still lingered. Sinclair knew by this hat he waited for more last words.

"Well, Peter, what would you say?"

"Benny Bowlegs say. I mus'tell you, dere's two, t'ree, seben, fibe, strange white men bin by de ab'nue gate. He look like poor buckrah and cattle-tief. He bin day dis morning, but he gone. Benny Bowlegs tell me, for tell you, dat he mus'hab some talk wid you when you done you breck'us."

"It must be *here*, then, Peter. Tell Benny to find some excuse for coming to me here, and to come as soon as he pleases."

"Oh! him kin come. I tell em:"—and, pulling at his woolituft, and scraping with his foot upon the floor, Little Peter disappeared. He had scarcely gone, when Benny Bowlegs, not waiting the permission he had solicited, entered the chamber also. He brought with him the holsters of his young master, wrapped up in the fragment of a blanket.

"I tink, Mass Willie," said he, "dat you better hab dese little bullpups yer, onder you own han'. Dere's no telling how soon you may want 'em. De swode is good 'nough, when you hab dem tory in chopping reach, but de pups kin keep guard on door and winder."

"What have you seen or heard, Benny?"

"I *see*, Mass Willie! I hab sight ob Hell-fire Dick, and two, t'ree, sebben, fibe, udder hog and cattle tief, down by the ab'nue gate. I 'speck day must ha' bin see me too, for soon day gone clean out ob sight. I reckon day's all now camber up in de woods below. Day's a watching, Mass Willie. Day's arter mischief dis mawning!"

"Did you see Pete Blodgit among them?"

"I nebber mek' out dat pusson; but I reckon he's jus' like de buzzard, always hab a nose when der's a bullock to be skin and clean."

"Exactly! Keep a look out for him! Remember, above all things, that he is not to have a notion that I am here! He must not see my horse, or saddle, or bridle, or anything that he will know as mine. And should he appear on the place, do you, or Little Peter, keep an eye on him all the while he is here; watch all his motions; and, should you see that he discovers anything, clap hands on him at once, *rope* him, and hide him away! Much depends on our blinding *his* eyes, Benny."

"I'd radder bung 'em up fair, right away!" said the truculent Benny Bowlegs, showing his enormous double fist, by way of indicating the *modus operandi* in such a performance.

"Well, you need not mince matters with such a scoundrel; only see that he makes no discoveries, and, should you suspect him of any, then instantly rope and lock him up; but not otherwise."

"Leff 'em to me, Mass Willie. I knows how to manage de warmint. Don't you t'ink, Mass Willie, you better hab a poun' or two ob dem powder and bullet you bring, yer in de house."

Why, old fellow, you don't think we're to have a siege?"

"I don' know, Mass Willie, but when Hell-fire Dick's about, and hab t'ree, sebben, fibe pussons wid 'em, and der's no sodgers, red coats or blue, anywhar, in these parts, I reckon it's jest as well to be ready for de rapscallions."

"You are right, perhaps, Benny."

"I *knows* I'm right."

"Well, do as you please; but do not let your movements be seen or suspected."

Benny's only answer to this caution, consisted in lifting his forefinger to his left eye, and drawing down the lower lid. The action said as clearly as words could have done:—

"Noting green yer, maussa." Benny's experience and successes had been such, that nobody suspected him of an unwise vanity when he asserted his own wisdom and sagacity.

The interview ceased at this moment, and Benny disappeared, walking with singular erectness, like a well-drilled grenadier on parade. His ancient war spirit was returning fast.

Willie Sinclair was just finishing a formidable breakfast, when his sister Carrie reappeared;—little Lottie remaining with her father in the breakfast-room. Leaving brother and sister to a long conversation, of much mutual interest to themselves but none to us, let us now go forth, and see what progress has been made by our ruffianly acquaintances, whom we left in hot pursuit last night.

CHAPTER X

THE OUTLAWS IN COUNCIL.

It is apt to irritate the very best of people to be defeated in their calculations, to be disappointed in pleasant aims, and to find themselves baffled in properly-planned performances. The passions of our banditti, headed by All-fire Dick, are not of a sort to make them more placable than persons less ambitiously disposed. But we are not yet to speak of them as being disappointed of their prey. They had not, it is true, run down the fugitive, Sinclair, with his sack of guineas, to say nothing of those rolls of dingy continental money, which had been so painfully wrested from the keeping of Master Pete Blodgit. But, it was not supposed, by the most confident among them, that they would exactly run him down. They knew him to be something of the old soldier—very cool, brave, and crammed full with the lessons of experience. That they should be able to out-travel him, they knew; but, that he should suffer them to come up with him, on the high-road, was not a part of their calculations. The thing was possible surely; since a sleepy man, exhausted with fatigue, soaked with rain, suffering with hunger, is apt to be blind and deaf, particularly of a dark night. Therefore, he might have been "*overslaughed*," as he nodded onward, drowsing on his steed. But this was simply a something on the bare skirts of possibility, and formed but an humble feature among the calculations of our banditti.

To get ahead of the fugitive, cut him off from the Barony, then scour the woods below, in which he would be supposed to take shelter, and pick up their prey almost at their pleasure, this was their calculation; and a very good one too, had they been dealing with a timid man, or one wanting in experience and resources. But, as we have seen, they were defeated by a

very simple expedient; and, by the way, none but simple expedients are likely to be successful in moments of emergency.

But our banditti were not as yet to know that they had been defeated. They had no reason to suppose that our major of dragoons was *not* somewhere in the woods below. They were aware, of course, that there was a possibility that he had made such headway as to reach "the Barony" before themselves since they knew not, exactly, at what moment he had fled from the stable-loft of Blodgit; nor could they measure the paces of his horse, except by some general estimate of his powers after a hard day's ride. Still, when they had attained the point at which they aimed, there was some feeling of disappointment, that they had not found some proofs by which to determine the question of his whereabouts.

In the cool of the morning hours, and before the dawn, we find them assembled, accordingly, in close proximity with the avenue leading to the mansion-house and settlements of Colonel Sinclair. They had skirted the avenue and fences, which cut off the cultivated fields from the natural forests. They had put themselves in such a position, along this line, as would discourage any but a desperate attempt, on the part of the fugitive, to make his passage upward. A bold man, they well knew, might attempt and do it, provided he were near enough; for they were too few in number to make the *cordon* perfect: but they relied on luck, their own agility, and the fact that the fugitive could not well know where they had severally disposed themselves. This done, there was a consultation.

Now, a consultation, whether in war or physic, is apt to produce a confusion of tongues; and our banditti, though somewhat coerced by the terrible authority maintained by All-fire Dick, was yet a free-spoken body, and there were some of the members who would always cavil even when compelled to submit.

"We've lost him, I reckon," said "Skin-the-Serpent," with an oath and growl; "and may as well hang up our fiddles for all the good that'll come of playing out of tune."

"Lost h–ll!" roared All-fire Dick. "What did you expect? Did you reckon he'd stand, and let us ride him down on the open track? Didn't we *know* that he'd take to the woods?"

"But how do we know that he's taken to the woods? How do we know that he ain't safely housed at the Barony at this very moment?"

"How do we know anything but by finding out? We've *got* to find out; that's all! But whether he's in the woods, or in the house, either way, I reckon, we've got him!"

"Got him! I don't see."

"What are your eyes good for, I wonder? For a fellow that knows how to use cold steel, I reckon, Skin-the-Sarpent, you're about the most bull-headed of all the blind cattle, I know!"

"Well, Dick, let's hear what you're good for! What are you going to do?"

"There'd be no difficulty ef we had men enough, and men of the right kind. But what's to be done with fellows that begin the fight by dropping their tails? That's not the way to do anything! When I hear a man say, 'It's no use to try,' I'm for knocking him on the head at once; bekaise, I know, a man that sets out with that sort of sperrit, never does try with the whole heart of a man! What I wants of them that goes with me, is never to think it possible for the game to go agin us, tell he sees the stakes cleaned up and gone! A man musn't even believe he's dead, tell he feels the scalp off, and kain't lift a leg to kick. Now, in this business, I'll tell you what's to be done. Ralph Brunson must start off, right away, for Zeke Rodgers and his dogs. He's not quite five miles off. May be, he'll find some of our fellows thar besides. We don't want but a couple here; for it's no use having too many to set down to a small dinner. But we must have Zeke, and his dogs, and a man or two more, ef he's got 'em with him. Meantime, we must skairt the avenue, and keep a lookout on all the crossings!"

"But, what ef we could find out ef Major Sinclair *has* got to the Barony?" said Skin-the-Serpent.

"Find out ef you kin! I don't see how you're to set about it, onless we had a man to spare to send in, as a traveller, with orders to look about him with a snake's eye, and see what's to be seen under the table. But we ain't half strong enough now, to watch the avenue and road rightly, or I'd send Joe Best.

'Twill take the whole four of us, mighty sharp-sighted and spry too, to kiver the roads, and watch the crossings."

At that moment, who should pop into the midst of the circle, but our amiable overseer, Master Pete Blodgit. He wore the most smiling face in the world, had heard every syllable that had been said, and had conceived the idea of making himself commendable to the outlaws, by volunteering to visit Zeke Rodgers, leaving Ralph Brunson to add to the resources of the party, on the watch; and, if need be, for the exploration of the Barony itself. Full of this idea, and never doubting that he should find a favorable reception from the outlaws, in their moment of acknowledged difficulty, the worthy Pete popped into the circle; but it would seem somewhat prematurely

The moment he became visible, All-fire Dick leaped upon him and seized him by the throat. The outlaw was equally vexed at being surprised, and followed.

"What the h–ll brought you hyar, you weasel-sperritted rascal, when I told you to keep off?"

And he throttled the skulk, with steely fingers, until the breath came out in a gurgle from his throat, along with broken syllables of entreaty.

"Lord ha' marcy! Oh!—I'm a-cho—choking!"

"What brought you hyar, you d—d skunk, when I told you not to come?" cried the ruffian, as he hurled the fellow to the earth and clapped his foot upon his neck.

"Ah! be marciful! be marciful! I jest come to lend a hand in case of needcessity."

"And what, in the name of ——, kin sich a mean sneak and coward as you do, when it's a business that needs nothing but strong men only? You varmint! I know better what you come for! You thought there was to be some pickings, did you?—and you'd have found fingers enough, after we had found the flesh! But I'll slit your ears for you, you skunk!—I'll—"

And, with these words, the outlaw drew his knife, a monstrous *couteau de chasse*, worthy to compare with the bowie-knife of recent days; and, but for the interposition of "Skin-the-Serpent," it is beyond question that the ears—possibly the throat—of the intruder, might have been made to pay the

penalty of his imperthence; but "Skin-the-Serpent," who was not wholly the fool that All-fire Dick declared him, interposed, saying—

"Stop, Dick, the fellow *kin* do some sarvice! Hear what he's a saying. It's reason! *He* kin go for Zeke Rodgers and the dogs, and then Rafe Brunson kin go to 'the Barony,' and look about him thar."

"No! by thunder! Ef anybody's to go to the Barony, it's this mean sneak of a skunk. He's the right person to play the spy; he's got nateral recommendations for it; and, by the hocus, he shall do it! Do you hear—eh?"

The suggestion, approved by the ruffians generally, was one which did not commend itself to the party most concerned. The quick fears of Pete Blodgit readily conceived the risk which he should incur, making his appearance at the dwelling, at the hands of Major Sinclair, should the latter have really reached the Barony in safety. Respited only from the knife of "All-fire Dick," and permitted to rise, he trembled with the dread of that redoubted person; yet he felt, intuitively, that, to accede to his requisition, was to incur almost as great a danger. To steer an evasive course is, in all such cases, the usual resort of imbecility.

"I reckon he ain't got to the Barony at all. His horse was most gin out, when he come last night. He couldn't ha' done it, no how! He's in the woods here, below, I'm sartin; and, ef you'll let me, I'll have Zeke Rodgers and his dogs here, in a short two hours."

"Did we ax you for your thinking, you etarnal skunk?" was the reply of Dick, as he resumed his grasp upon the fellow's throat. "Look you, thar's only one question, and I don't care a button which way you answer it; for my knife itches to be at you, with a wipe that'll clean your ears close to the skull! Will you go ahead or not?" And his finger pointed to the avenue. Without waiting for his answer, the ruffian whirled him about, applied his foot emphatically to the person of the overseer, and said—

"Mount!"

Pete Blodgit was not the man for a prolonged resistance to the wishes of a superior. He unfastened his horse from the

swinging limb to which he had tethered him, mounted in silence, and then paused.

"Well! why ain't you off?"

"I wanted to hear what I must do."

"Snake through the settlement!—spy! Use your eyes and ears, and find out ef the man we're a'ter has got up. You didn't need to be told that. You know'd it well enough. You kin do it well too, ef you're a mind to, for that's the only business you're good for."

"But suppose he's thar?"

"Well! that's what we wants to know."

"But, I reckon, ef he's thar, he'll hardly be willing to let me come away agin."

"Why, what the ——, will he want with such a critter as you?"

"He might make me a prisoner, or—"

"Hang you, you think!"

An involuntary shiver of the overseer showed the outlaw that he was on the raw of the difficulty. He proceeded:—

"Ef he hangs you, Blodgit, though we don't care the most etarnal button for your hide, yet, as you goes on our business, we'll hang up every mortal man in the Barony, and on the same tree, to keep you company. Thar now! be off! No more words. Ef they makes you prisoner—that is to say, ef you ain't back agin in two hours—we'll look arter you! Thar's enough of us, I reckon, to grapple our way into them walls, and tear you away with our teeth! And we're the men to do it! So, don't be skeared! You'll come off safely with hair and hide. Be off, and do your sneaking like the old sarpent in the garden."

Blodgit would still have lingered, having no just sense of the satisfactory or compensative, contained in the promise that, if hung, there should be company provided for him on the same tree; but Joe Best, a cool, quiet fellow, deliberately laid the lash of his whip over his shoulders with such emphasis as to settle instantly all further doubts on the part of the spy. He was off for the road and avenue on the instant.

"Them's the only argyments for sich a critter," was the commentary of the chief of the outlaws, which he accompanied

with a hearty chuckle. "And now, Ralph Brunson, do you be off at once for Zeke Rodgers and the dogs. We are not to stop doing till we hear from Blodgit. The truth is, the fellow stands a chaince of getting roped in some way; sure, ef Willie Sinclair's got to the Barony. You see it's cl'ar that Sinclair's found Blodgit out. Well, he's jest the man to work his fingers jest as his ideas work; and I shouldn't care a snap of *my* fingers ef he did knock the skunk of a fellow on the head."

"But then he's on *our* business, Dick," put in Skin-the-Serpent.

"Jest so! And, being on our business, ef he comes to any harm, we must see him righted! That's all cl'ar enough! What I meant was, that, as for any use that Pete Blodgit's to us, now that Sinclair's found him out, he's none; and 'twouldn't be of any consarn to us ef he *was* a hanging on the first tree, to-morrow! But we won't let him hang, ef we kin help it, while he's working on our account; and we'll be as good as our word, in hanging as many others as we kin lay our hands on, in that blasted nobility consarn, ef so be they dare to put Pete Blodgit's neck out of j'int. That's jest now as sartin as ef I had sworn it under the pulpit. Let's be driving, now, Serpent. We'll skairt the avenue and the lower fences, keeping close in the bushes as we go."

The remaining outlaws now took horse. Ralph Brunson had pushed off, almost as soon as ordered—exhibiting no such reluctance as Pete Blodgit. This latter worthy was making his way slowly to the dwelling, filled with many misgivings, and busily employed, mentally, in preparing the apologies for his conduct, should he find Major Sinclair at the Barony; and, in the event of his absence, a neat little narrative for the satisfaction of all other persons. Blodgit was not without a certain sort of genius. It was eminently foxy and skunkish, but of value and great use when practised upon those to whom the odor of either beast is yet unknown.

"Mass Willie," quoth Benny Bowlegs, peering into the chamber of Carrie Sinclair, where the major of dragoons still harbored, "sure as a gun, hyar's dat polecat, Pete Blodgit, a-coming up de ab'nue."

"See to him at once, Benny, and keep close upon his foot-

steps. See that he discovers nothing of me or mine. Keep him always in your sight, and remember, should he happen to make any discoveries, rope him, and shut him up!"

"Sure for dat, maussa!"

Benny was no sluggard. He moved off with the step and look of one who is equally prompt and determined. Certainly, if he has occasion to rope Blodgit—and he will not be slow to make the occasion—he will not be at pains to provide a silken garter. Five minutes after, he might be seen, with a significant plough-line in his hands, conducting the dubious overseer, with great apparent civility and attention, into the great hall where Colonel Sinclair, half reclining, half sitting, was nursing his podagra. But, before this presence could be reached, there were ceremonial restraints without number, none of which would the attentive Benny Bowlegs forego. He could spare none of the civilities due to so proper a person as Mr. Pete Blodgit.

"Fassen dat hoss of Misser Pete Blodgit to *t'odder* tree, you little black Toby," was the cry of Benny Bowlegs, to the white-shirted little son of sables, who stood at the portals.

"Never mind, Benny, t'will do thar, where I hitched him."

"Beg you' pardon, Misser Pete Blodgit," responded Benny, with dignity, "'twon't do dar at all! Dat tree is plant for grow, not for hoss to chaw! Colonel Sincklar see dat hoss fassened to dat tree, he will jist as lief cut dat hoss trote, right away, as look 'pon 'em. You yerry black Toby?—do as I tell you."

"Oh! yes! move him to the other tree, Benny, ef you think your master won't like him at that," was the consenting and rather eager response of Blodgit, whose desire was by no means to see the knife of the colonel and the weasand of his horse more intimately acquainted.

Cut he trote, for true!" muttered Benny, "ef he cotch 'em dar."

"The colonel's well, Benny, I reckon?"

"I reckon *not* edzactly, Misser Pete Blodgit: he's jest sick enough to be all-fired skittish. You'll jes' be pretticklar, Misser Pete Blodgit, wha' you guine say to 'em, for dis is de time wid 'em nebber to 'top t'ink wha' sawt ob answer he guine mek'; and he jest as leab speak to you wid de little gould-headed

knob ob he walking-'tick, as wid de civility ob de tongue! Please 'member Misser Pete Blodgit, sence I no wants to carry you down to you hoss wid you head all bloody, and maybe a break somewhar in you tighbone or arm!"

"Thank you, Benny; I'll be mighty considerant of his sitivation."

"Better for you, das all!"

Blodgit, at the entrance, seemed disposed to hesitate. The door was open before him.

"Dis de way, Misser Pete Blodgit; you must 'member ob old, I reckon."

"Oh! yes, Benny, I reckon I knows all about the Barony, jest as well as them that lives here."

"Yes, Misser Pete Blodgit, I reckon you does! You always was mighty quick to look 'bout you wherebber you goes; and, sometimes, I reckon you look jes' whay people don't want you to set you eyes."

Blodgit felt that there was something in this speech offensively suggestive, and it ruffled him a little. He replied rather quickly:—

"Well, I spose I had a right to look jest where I did."

"Now, look yer, Misser Pete Blodgit, better you don't say not'ing to ole maussa 'bout *you rights*, and all dat sawt ob ting; kaise, you see, he's a gentleman what don't blieb berry much in de rights ob poor buckrah; and ef you talks to him 'bout you right to look 'bout him, whay you please, you know wha' he guine say?"

"What will he say, Benny?"

"Well, he will say, 'Jes' so, Misser Pete Blodgit, it's you right to spy, may be, but it's my right for knock you on de head for spy in my house!' Das wha' he guine to say; and I tell you, Misser Pete Blodgit, he guine do wha' he say, sure as t'under."

"Well, I don't think he'll knock *me* down, Benny, for I ain't a-guine to talk about my rights to spy in any man's place. I don't spy, Benny, that's not my business."

"I berry grad for yerry you say so, Misser Pete Blodgit; and now, ef you say you wants to see ole maussa, dar's de paat' [path] open for you."

And, with a very lordly air, Benny waved his hand to the open entrance, and Blodgit passed in, rather demurely, and with his uneasiness somewhat increased by the suspicions courtesies and sinister warnings of Ben Bowlegs. To the uninitiated and unobservant, we may mention here, that, had Blodgit been at all in favor with the negro, the latter would have styled him Mass Pete, or maussa; — the "Misser Pete Blodgit" was very decidedly ceremonial, and it did not escape the notice of the overseer. But no time was given him for reflection. Once in the great passage, he was in sight from either of the two large rooms which opened upon it, in one of which Colonel Sinclair might be seen, half reclined upon an easy-chair, with his game-leg stretched out upon a cushioned stool before him. His gold-headed cane lay on the table, convenient to his grasp; and the massive knob on the top of it, marked with its owner's crest and initials, appeared to Blodgit to have grown prodigiously in its dimensions since he last had the satisfaction of looking upon it.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BARON.

BLODGIT entered the presence with a manner studiously apologetic; the humility of which, however, was quite unaffected. He could not shake off the sense of that habitual awe, of the lordly superior, in which he had been reared; and he now stood, cap in hand, shoulders bent, foot awkwardly scraping, and a half-silly, half-smiling visage, which was designed to be very conciliatory.

Col. Sinclair was one of the despots of the old school; a gentleman no doubt among gentlemen; but a lord to all others; —a man capable of generosity in high degree, and condescension; but one who expected that you should understand his condescension, and feel his generosity. He was, really, a person of a century even older than his own; and though he fully believed in Adam and Eve, as the parents of that prolific family vulgarly recognised as the human, yet no priesthood in the world could have persuaded him that there were not a great many varieties of clay employed in the moulding of those myriad varieties which constitute the sum total of the races of men! He had swayed as a superior so long, and as a natural superior, that it was not possible with him to question his own legitimacy, or to acknowledge the claims of that fungus multitude which it needed another hundred years to raise, in any degree, to a fairly human position. He really meant no scorn, or contempt, when, without turning his head, or answering the reverence of the overseer, he said:—

"Well, what is it you want, Blodgit? What brings you here without being sent for?"

These words, uttered by stentorian lungs—for in that day *empressment* in voice and manner was by no means held to be vulgar among the Carolina aristocracy—sustained by a lordly

look, from brows of size and authority,—white head, ruddy cheeks, and a face originally nobly handsome,—to say nothing of a fine physique, broad shoulders, massy form, and the loftiest stature—these words, so uttered, and from such a person, had the effect of additionally staggering the doubtful confidence of the overseer; who twirled his cap, and slightly receded, and muttered something unintelligibly.

"Speak out like a man, fellow! What the devil scares you? You have something to say? Out with it, and no long talk!"

Thus urged, Blodgit made an effort.

Well, colonel, you see, I come about the major."

"The major! and who's the major, I pray?"

"Why, Major Willie Sinclair, sir, your son—"

"And who authorized you, sirrah, to speak to me about that young man? and who told you that I was prepared to hear of him, and to recognise him in any military authority which was not recognised by his sovereign and mine? Do you suppose, sir, that I am the man to tolerate his or your impertinence? I know you to be one of his rapscallion followers; but sirrah, it will be time enough to thrust him, or them, upon my presence, when I am prepared to summon them. If you have nothing better to speak of, depart! I desire to hear nothing of my son, or of his elegant companions."

Listeners are said to hear but little good of themselves at any time. Willie Sinclair was not in a situation to render the proverb an erring one in his case. He was in the adjoining room with his sister; not there, as a listener to his father, by any means, but only of what should fall from the lips of Master Pete Blodgit. He smiled, grimly enough, as he heard the complimentary tenor of the old man's speech.

Blodgit was nearly reduced to desperation at the determined rejection of his only topic, by the person whom he sought; and, in his despair, as is usual in such cases, he resorted to exaggeration in order to compel attention:—

"Don't want to make you angry, Col——"

"Then don't make me angry!"

"That's it, colonel!—I don't want to make you angry—but you see, last night—"

"Well, what of last night?"

"Why, sir, you see——"

"Stop sir—a moment!—what do you mean by lingering here, Benny? are you wanted in the house? Is n't your proper place in the fields, old fellow?"

Benny, it must be remembered, had assigned him the special duty of keeping Blodgit constantly in sight. He had suffered himself to appear more than once in his master's presence, unnecessarily, it would seem, in the performance of this duty. But he had no such reasons as Blodgit for showing himself abashed. He answered the inquiry steadily, with the confident freedom of one who not only knows his own honesty of purpose, but who feels sure of its general recognition.

"Proper place sometime in de fields, maussa; sometime in de house! Proper place whar de officer ob de day puts me; and when he don' know 'bout de position ob de inimy, den proper place whay I puts myself, to do sarbice!"

"You are a vain old rascal, Benny; and will fancy yourself a soldier. Beware how you come within reach of my cane, old fellow."

"Hah! Mass Kurnel; der's pussons in dis wurl, and a many ob am too, dat ought to taste dat cane long 'fore he reach de shoulders of dis nigger! I hab business yer, Mass Kurnel;—I hab inquisitions for Misser Pete Blodgit, whenebber you done wid 'em; der's some cattle business atwixt us."

"Very well! You can wait with your 'inquisitions.' It is Mister Pete Blodgit that has to do with me. Go on now, sir. You will perceive that I have no claim upon your attention, while my servant has."

"Blodgit's desperation—and vexation too—had increased duly, during this little episode; and with the air of a man resigned to his fate, he blurted out:—

"Well, kurnel, all I've got to say is jest this, that of your son, the major, aint got safely here last night, or maybe by daylight this morning, then it's a mighty hard thing to say that he'll ever get here at all again! It's a despret likely chance that they've cotched and murdered him along the road!"

"Caught! Murdered!—Willie murdered!" And the old man caught up his staff, and made a desperate effort to rise, but fell back in the fruitless attempt while a sharp cry attested th

acute spasm which wrung his foot—possibly his heart,—at that moment. In an instant, Carrie Sinclair rushed in from the interior, where she had remained *perdu* with her brother, and unloosed the old man's cravat, while she cried—

"Oh! don't believe it! It's all false. Willie's in no danger, father! He's not murdered!"

"Then he got here, safe, ma'am?" inquired Blodgit eagerly, his eye straining upon hers.

The ready wit of the maiden came to her rescue. The eager inquiry taught her of the near approach which she had made to the revelation of her secret.

"Got here!" she exclaimed, turning to the spy. "Then where is he? Why do we not see him? Go, good Blodgit, and bring him to us at once."

"Jes' you tell me, whay for fin' 'em, Pete Blodgit. I kin go fetch 'em ef you tell me whay for look?" So spoke brave Benny Bowlegs.

"That's jest what I kaint do, now; for I came here, you see, to look a'ter him, and see ef he was safe. I know'd them bloody chaps wor' a'ter him last night; fur I heard 'em a-screaming up the road jest a'ter the major pushed off; and ef they cotched him, with the heap of guineas he had about him, I reckon they'd make no bones of putting a bullet into him, or a knife."

"And who dem people bin?" demanded Benny, with an air of the most perfect sincerity.

"Who, but the most savagest of all the tories in these parts—Hell-fire Dick, and Skin-the-Serpent, and Rafe Brunson, and Joe Best, and, I reckon, thar' was others too, and they had dogs."

The old man groaned convulsively; then seemed to recover, and, feebly speaking, though with quite a determined effort at composure, he said—

"And so you know nothing more, Mr. Blodgit?"

"Not the weight of a feather, colonel. I pushed off at peep o' day to see a'ter him; but there was nothing and nobody to be seed anywhar. Thar' wor' hoof-marks enough 'long the road, so thar' war' no telling. I reckon, the major hadn't time to stop, and pushed on above, and they a'ter him. Ef he ain't here, he's may be gone above."

The faintest possible smile turned the corner of Benny Bowlegs' mouth, like a little errant sunbeam through the woods peeping into a country smithy; but he soon heaped over it all the charcoal in his complexion, and it totally escaped Blodgit's vision. His faculty was in the discovery of material matters only. By this time, the redoubtable colonel had begun to recover some of his strength and soldiership.

"What a d—d condition it is to be in! This cursed foot!" and he looked down upon the member—so much more sinned against than sinning—with some such look as the axe might be supposed to have worn when it bit down through the purple arteries of fair Anne Boleyn's neck. He continued—no doubt perceiving how very idle it would be to waste his epithets of anger on his own foot—turning to Blodgit—

"And you, a man grown, with gun and rifle in your hands—you allowed the wretched boy to be shot down and butchered in your sight, without so much as lifting weapon?"

"Lord bless you, kurnel, I didn't see it, nor them. I jest hearn them and their dogs, as they went by, full speed, a'ter the major, and he with all that money!"

"The rebel to his king! He deserves his fate; but you!—you could wait till daylight, before you came to give the alarm, instead of dashing after them!—"

"Why, Lord, kurnel, what was I to do, and a lame man too, ag'in the most powerful, strong fighting-men of all the tories—"

"Loyalists, sirrah! loyalists! Though, by the way, these fellows of whom you speak are mere outlaws—"

"I reckon, you're right thar!"

"Le' me ax you, Misser Pete Blodgit, whay Mass Willie bin git all dem guineas?"

"Well, he got a smart chainee of them from me. I reckon, going on to a hundred; and, I reckon, he had as many more besides from other people."

"And where did you get a hundred guineas?" demanded the colonel.

"Why, kurnel, from the corn and fodder, you see, and the knives, and other things. The bettermost part b'longed to Miss Carrie here, that I had killected for her from sales."

"And tell me, Missir Pe'e Blodgit, how dem blackguard gem-

plemen come for know Mass Willie hab all dat heap o' guinea?" asked Benny, with a grave slyness and squint of eye.

"How they know'd? Well, I reckon they had a suspicion of it: they *reckon'd* he wan't a travelling about with nothing to go upon. But I don't know that they know'd at all!"

We must suppose a good many other questions asked and answered after a fashion; but, it will be readily understood, that, during the whole investigation, there was a certain constraint over all the parties, with the exception of the colonel. The daughter and Benny Bowlegs could not reveal their secret; and Blodgit, from policy, kept his. The task before the daughter was a severe one: to see her father suffer—to hear his involuntary groan of anguish—to witness the struggle between his pride, and the deep-seated but suppressed affections in his heart—and to remain silent, when it was in her power, by a single word, to relieve him of all his mental suffering at least!

"What is to be done?" moaned, rather than spoke the father, forgetting all his Roman resolutions. "Would to God, I were able to take the saddle!"

He looked inquiringly at Blodgit, but turned away with a sickening gesture.

"Nothing from him!" he murmured despondingly. Suddenly his eye caught that of Benny Bowlegs. "Ha! what's to prevent *you?* You are able to mount horse, and use sabre, if needs be; and there is Little Peter, who will fight for Willie too! How is it, Ben, that I have to say to you—'Go and find Willie Sinclair, living or dead, and bring him to his father?"

"De Lawd in heabben be praise, maussa! I gone! Come, Misser Pete Blodgit; we kin go togedder; me, you, and Little Peter. We kin all go togedder—by differen' roads. You ride *down*, Misser Pete Blodgit; and little Peter and me, *one*, will ride *up*. When you gits in de tick [thick] woods you scatter *you* men; and me and Peter will scatter *we two*, and s'arch abbrywhare!"

This very definite arrangement chimed in with Blodgit's desires. He had no wish that the negro, whom he somewhat feared, should accompany him below. He was satisfied that Willie Sinclair was *not* at the Barony. The old man's agony could not have been simulated. He had fulfilled his task suf-

ficiently—satisfactorily, as he thought—and there was nothing in the eye of Colonel Sinclair, or that of his daughter, which encouraged him to remain. Of course, he bowed himself out as reverently as he came, the colonel scarcely heeding his expressions of devotion and adieu; and Benny Bowlegs was particularly careful to escort the overseer to his nag, and see him on his way. He had ordered horses, in the bearing of Blodgit, for himself and little Peter; and when the former rode off, he repeated his instructions for that "s'arch below" in which Blodgit was to scatter himself abroad, for the thorough exploration of the 'thick' forests. The spy, once out of sight, Benny had his horses quietly put back into the stables.

Meanwhile, the old warrior, the stoical philosopher, the Roman father, relieved of the presence of the stranger, buried his face in his hands with a terrible burst of anguish, exclaiming in the very words of the minstrel monarch—

"My son! my son! would God that I had died for thee, my son!"

The tears gushed from Willie Sinclair's eyes in his place of hiding, where he had heard every syllable. He could scarce contain himself; and it required a prodigious effort to avoid rushing forth and throwing himself at his father's feet. But Carrie Sinclair, twining her arms about the old man's neck, exclaimed—

"Oh! father, do not fear! There is nothing to fear! It is *not* true that brother is in any danger! Willie has escaped the outlaws!"

"Ha! ha! escaped, has he? Escaped! are you sure of it? How do you come to know?"

"Benny is sure of it, father! He knows! He is certain!"

"If Benny is certain, I am satisfied! Escaped the bloodhounds, has he? Ah!—" A long deep moan of relief. This over, he looked up angrily—"And why did neither of you tell me this before? Why did you suffer me to expose myself before that reptile?"

"It was because Benny had reasons, father, for keeping that very person in ignorance of our knowledge."

"Benny is becoming too strategical by half! Why the mystery? Is not this fellow, Blodgit, in the employ of Willie

Sinclair? What good reason is there for keeping *him* from a fact in which he is naturally interested. Did he not show his interest, in the very act of coming here in search of him?"

Benny reappeared at this very moment, and heard and understood the remark.

"Shet up, maussa," he said coolly, "and no bodder yourself wid dis transaction. You hab 'nough to bodder you. 'Tis 'nough, I tell you now, dat dem d—n skunk, dat run Mass Willie last night, no hab de nose for follow? He git shet ob dem! I know! I see! I bin talk wid 'em myself dis morning, by times, so help me God!"

"You did! You spoke with Willie this morning?"

"Jes' so! A good hour 'fo' daylight."

"And Willie talked with you?"

"Jes' so! I yerry 'em talk."

"And you spoke with him?"

"Zackly! I tell 'em heap o' tings."

"You saw him, too, with your eyes open?"

"Jes' so, maussa! and feel 'em wid my open han!"

"Ah! to feel his wounds! He was hurt?"

"He no hab he't [hurt] anywhar! I shake he han's, like one gempleman shake han' wid 'noder gempleman; and I feed 'em! I gi' 'em someting for eat."

"And he ate!—did he?—you saw him eat?"

"Like a mighty 'trong [strong] man, wid a mighty sharp 'tomach, maussa."

"Ha! ha! ha! He had an appetite, had he?"

This was said with a convulsive chuckle. In a moment after, with changed voice—

"And why, you d—d rascal, do you tell me these things? What is it to me whether the rebel you speak of has an appetite or not? Do you suppose I care a straw whether he can speak with you or not; can see you or not? or whether you see or speak with him? I wish to hear nothing of this sort in future! Carrie, my child, you will please remember my wishes. As for you, you sooty rascal, begone from my sight! Do not come within reach of my stick! Do not let me see you again to-day!"

Benny Bowlegs walked out very composedly, a grin mantling

his visage as soon as his back was turned. Carrie Sinclair went up to her father; but he repulsed her gently. His eyes were moist, and his face was in an instant covered in his hands Willie Sinclair peeped through the half-opened door at him while he sate in this position; but he did not venture to approach. The son's eyes were very full of tears, when his sister rejoined him, and in her chamber they retired to weep together for awhile: in which performance, we may add, that Willie Sinclair was soon very fast asleep.

CHAPTER XII.

HELL-FIRE DICK ENGAGES IN A NEW VENTURE.

It was by no means a difficult task with Pete Blodgit—a fellow very well versed in woodcraft—to find the traces of the scouting party under "All-fire Dick," and to make his way to the spot where they harbored. He first encountered "Skin-the-Serpent," whom he accompanied until they came up with Joe Best; and the three then rode on together till they found the leader of the gang, who was more deeply buried in the woods. Ralph Brunson had not yet returned with Zeke Rodgers and his bloodhounds, and Dick, the captain, was fast becoming impatient, in his eagerness to begin the chase.

In a thick copse, some half a mile in the rear of the garden of the Barony, the whole party assembled; and here, all alighted, and our overseer made his report. His conviction, that Willie Sinclair had not yet succeeded in making his way to the mansion-house, was naturally that of the group; and they now longed for nothing so eagerly as the arrival of Brunson, Rodgers, and the dogs, in order to run down the fugitive with his burdensome bag of guineas. To beat the woods, or make any alarm, until the hounds and the additional force of hunters were put on the scent, was no more their policy than it would have been had their game been the royal buck himself. But, while they all declared their impatience at the delay, a new and bolder idea seized upon All-fire Dick, induced by some of the particulars given by Blodget, in his narration of what happened on his visit. Dick, the Diabolical, had listened for a while in silence; but now put in:—

"You say," said he to the overseer, "that the old man kain't move his timbers?"

"Kain't stir a peg, no more than ef he had no legs at all. Thar he sets in a big chair with soft cushions; and his legs lay

on a bench covered with saft pillows; and he sets by the table; and his gould-headed stick lays on the table easy to his hands. Jest so I left him. When he wants to move, Little Peter lifts him about from place to place."

"The dem'd old rascal! He was always trying to look like a sort of king!" exclaimed Skin-the-Serpent.

"Jest so! and he never had a good word yit for a poor man! He talked to me jest as ef I was no better than a nigger."

"Well! he's rich, I reckon!" quoth Dick.

"Rich as a Jew, they say; but that don't give him any Christian right to talk to a poor man as ef he was a nigger."

"Yes! a rich man has a right to talk as he pleases! and you knows it; and you feels it! Ef you didn't, why didn't you clap a stopper on his mouth when he talked to you as ef you was a nigger?" was the retort of Dick.

"I'd like to know how I was to do that?"

"You'd like to know! Why, a man naterally knows, when he's got the heart of a man beating in his buzzum! Hadn't you your arms, and hands, and feet; and wan't you armed with a whip; and hadn't you a knife in your belt; and wan't he *thar*—before you, disabled as I may say—onable to lift a limb to help himself agin an inimy?"

"Yes, but thar was that double-j'inted nigger, Benny Bowlegs;—a fellow that's as strong as a horse, and ain't afeard of the devil; and didn't I know that Little Peter was nigh about, too? and he's as strong as Benny, and he ain't afeared neither! Ef I had lifted finger agin the kurnel, they'd ha' mounted me right away; and I couldn't ha' held a hand agin them two! If it hadn't been for *them*, I'd ha' soon showed the old kurnel that he wan't to hev' his own way always. I thought of giving him a wipe with a hickory towel more than once."

"You thought of it, did you!" quoth the outlaw chief, with a look expressive of the fullest disgust. "And I tell you, Pete Blodgit, that you'd no more have thought of lifting we'pon agin ole Sinclair, disabled as he is, so long as his eyes was upon you, than you'd ha' thought of fighting a whole British rigiment! It wan't the niggers that kept you from trying your hands upon him; but 'twas his eyes upon *your'n;* and your own cowardly sperrit: and what you knowed of him of old: for, impudent as

he is, and a tyrant all over, there's no denying that he's got spunk enough to fight the devil. But *I* ain't afeared of him; and I never seed the nigger yit that had the impidence to look into my eyes; and I'll go and and hev' a talk with the old rascal, and see what *I* can make out of him?"

"You go—to 'the Barony'?—and what for?" said Skin-the-Serpent, suspiciously. "The young fellow ain't thar!"

"But the old one is?"

"Well, but it's neither the old one nor the young one that we wants—it's the guineas."

"Jest so, Sarpent, and it's the guineas that I'm arter. Thar must be smart pickings in that old house, I'm a thinking. The colonel's rich as a Jew. Why, the very stick that he walks with has as much as five guineas on the head of it! And I reckon thar's a chist of gould and silver put away somewhar about, and the young woman has her jewels and fine things."

Well, but how are you to git at them?"

"That's for me to find out! I wants to see how the land lies; and what Blodgit tells us, shows that it's mighty easy, jist now, to do so. I wouldn't like to come sudden up with the old kurnel, ef he had his limbs and strength, and we'pons at hand; but, you see, he ain't able to stir a peg, and I takes him by surprise. The niggers I ain't afeared of; and don't you hear what Blodgit says, that they've started off, jest now, when he did, to beat the upper woods a-s'arching arter the body of the major? Ha! ha! ha! s'arching arter the dead body of a man what's alive and kicking. Well! don't you see that it's a first-rate chaimce, jest now, to look into the premises, and see what there is worth picking up."

The adventure became suddenly very plausible in the eyes of the group. Skin-the-Serpent, in particular, seemed disposed to abandon the hunt of the son, in order to do honor to the father. They all began to suspect that the shares of Dick were to be unnecessarily large.

"It won't do for you *one* to go. We kin *all* go. I reckon there 'll be more than all of us kin bring away!" So spoke Skin-the-Serpent.

Even Blodgit was not unwilling to return to the Barony; following, Jackal-fashion, in the wake of the proper beasts of

prey. But Dick's genius over-ruled the rest with its usual potency.

"'Twon't do! That's jist the way with you! You'd all start off, after the *fresh* deer, though you were on the hot scent of the old one, and jist about to run him down! And you'd go to the Barony, and be loading yourself down with more than you could carry; so that if an inimy should git upon your track, you'd have neither the heart to fight, nor the heels to run. It's the baggage-wagons that half the time defeats the army. Now, I'm not for gutting 'the Barony,' I'm for picking up only what I can safely put away; nice little things by way of ornament; rings, and seals, and breastpins, and the like; as many watches and silver spoons, as will lie snug together in coat and breeches pocket; and as large a bag of gould as will set easy on a nag's quarters. It may be that there's no gould at the house to be got at. They hide away sich matters pretty closely; and then the old kurnel's sich a d—d obstinate colt, that he'd never tell, even though you was a-cutting his tongue out with a sheep's scissors. But we know that the *young one* has the pure kinage [coinage] in guineas, to the tune of one hundred, or thereabouts, and we know that he's in these woods; and hyar [here] you must watch and wait till Brunson and Rodgers come in with the dogs; and, by that time, I hopes to be back with you and take a hand in the hunt! It's only a short wisit that I means to pay the kurnel; and if the men and dogs were ready, hyar, I shouldn't think of going to 'the Barony.' But I kaint bear to be sucking my thumbs. I must be a-doing; and one hour or so kaint spile our chainces in the hunt after the young buck."

Of course, he silenced opposition, as was his wont. He gave his instructions in brief terms. His plans had been promptly conceived, as is always the case with the determined will.

"Hyar," said he, "we're half a mile only to the back of the garden; and the garden's but a small distance to the house. I'll only have to pull down a few rails to get into the grounds, and there's a smart sprinkling of trees, that 'll cover me pretty close till I gets nigh to the building. Look for me baick in a short hour and a-hafe! Keep the dogs close till I come! Skairt the line of fences. Keep one of the fellows stationed near the road at Fryar's Bend. All that you've got to do is

jest to keep the young one from gitting above you. That's all!"

"S'pose something should happen to you, Dick?" suggested Skin-the-Serpent.

"What's to happen?"

"Why, s'pose the kurnel's got a we'pon hid away close at hand? He's an old sodger you know."

"You hear Pete Blodgit says he haint! Why should he? He don't think there's any danger. He don't calkilate our chainces just now, when both armies is so far above. But, if I aint back here in a short hour and a-hafe, then, prehaps, you'd better ride up in a body, and ax after me. That's the how!"

With these words, having satisfied all scruples, silenced all objections, completed his instructions, the outlaw departed on his audacious adventure.

He rode a powerful steed, not so showy as useful, and he was a dextrous and fearless rider. Suppose, in his case, as in that of most of the common people of this country, that the costume of our Dick of Tophet was of ordinary blue homespun, trowsers and hunting shirt, yellow fringed, a rough and ragged coon-skin cap;—that he was weaponed with broadsword and pistols, like a regular dragoon;—as, indeed, he *had* been—and on both sides of the war;—and that his hirsute visage was just as savage as a wild grin, a sabre cut, untrimmed beard, unkempt hair, and a general scorn of appearances could render it;—and you can conceive sufficiently of the sensation which such a visiter will surely make when he penetrates he parlor of Sinclair's "Barony."

CHAPTER XIII.

NEW SIGNS IN THE SKY.

But the slumbers of our dragoon were slight and soon broken. Very brief was the respite which Willie Sinclair had seized from the necessities of war, in which to visit the old familiar places of his childhood, and once more to embrace the sisters of his love. It was, of course, a great qualification of his happiness that he was not permitted to approach his father; as the reader will have already inferred, from our hurried sketching, he was, in great degree, an outcast from the affections of the old man. Not that the terms between them had produced the formal banishment of the son; but that they were of such a nature, as to embitter their interviews when they met, with such sharp and biting controversies, as made it prudent for the young man to keep aloof. For months they had not met.

The father, a devoted loyalist, was naturally aroused to extremest anger, because of his son's active alliance with the cause of the American patriots. That he had had frequent successes, and had been honored with rapid promotion, in consequence, was rather an aggravation of his offence than an appeal to the paternal *amour propre*. When he heard of him, as he did occasionally, it was always to provoke his ire, no matter what the tidings. The report of his son's valor and ability, however grateful it might be in itself, was by no means a subject of exultation, when these qualities were exercised against the sovereign, for whose authority the old man entertained an almost religious reverence. But, even this cause of anger, sufficient in itself, was increased by another, in the misplaced affections of the young man. Colonel Sinclair was a natural aristocrat. His conventional world had confirmed the despotic character of his mind, and trained him to regard the family con-

here she smiled and pressed his hand—"if, indeed, she answers the description you give of her."

"What! you fancy my painting that of a self-deluded lover?"

"A little!"

"And I the most matter-of-fact person in the world; cool, cautious, calculating, with no more fancy than a plough-horse."

"I suppose a plough-horse has his fancies, when out of the traces, and after an hour's browsing in pleasant pastures. I give you an equal degree of credit. I suppose, could he speak, he would indulge in superlatives about his elysium—nay, no more protestations! Enough, Willie, that she is *your* favorite. That is enough to make her mine—to make me believe very much as you desire."

"Well, I hope for an early opportunity to enable you to judge for yourself. You will, all of you, in all probability, be compelled to cross the river and retreat to the hills of Santee. The war will soon approach this quarter. Rawdon is on his retreat. Greene will press upon his heels. Orangeburg must be one of the places which he will seek to hold, at all hazards,—for a time, at all events—and there will then be no possibility to escape a battle. You will have to remove from this neighborhood, which will then be covered with the troops of both parties in turn. Captain Travis will be under a like necessity of getting his family out of the way; and, unless he is more deeply committed to the British than I believe, you will probably meet on the hills."

"Do you suppose father will leave the Barony because of this approach of war? He will spurn the idea. It will be difficult to persuade him that he will not find perfect safety under the British Lion."

"We must teach him the absurdity of such a notion *now*—and we can. The day of his perfect faith in British prowess is pretty much gone by. He can not deceive himself much longer as to the result of this struggle."

"Ah! I don't see that! *He will not* see it! He does not believe your assurances, or that of your party; and the British maintain appearances well. When Lord Rawdon was here last, and father expressed his anxieties in respect to the successes of Marion and Sumter, my lord laughed at them; spoke of them

with perfect contempt; insisted upon them as gross exaggerations,—the small performances of a petty outlawry which would be crushed at once, were they not almost too insignificant for attention."

"And my father believed him?"

"He could not less. He *desired* to believe him; and his lordship seemed to be of unquestionable authority. The raising of the siege of Ninety-Six confirms him in the belief."

"He knows not then of the British abandonment of the post as soon as Greene was driven off. He will yet see fearful proofs of the fruits of this abandonment. Under the escort of Cruger, more than two thousand of the wretched loyalists, men, women, and children, their entire families, are on their way to the seaboard. The British are no longer able to protect them in their homes. Post after post is thus abandoned; and soon, the same future awaits the post at Orangeburg. Soon, the British army will be confined to Charleston, and they are destined to be driven thence as certainly."

"Not if they receive new regiments from Europe! Upon this my father counts. It was Lord Rawdon's assurance that there should be no lack of troops."

"An idle one. The British exchequer is exhausted. The British nation is prepared to refuse all further subsidies. They can obtain no more troops from Germany. They can no longer pay them if they could get them. Their best hope lay in the strength of the loyalists. The game was to make one half of the people fight the other half; but this hope is failing fast. Their only resource, for new regiments, is Ireland, and the Irish desert their ranks almost as soon as they take the field. Rawdon can no longer yield his confidence to his own regiments. The fate of the war is inevitable. It needs only that we should avoid a general engagement. If we can prolong the struggle for six months, and avoid all serious disaster in the meanwhile, we triumph."

We must not omit to mention, that Carrie Sinclair was, herself no moderate rebel. She sided fully with her brother in his principles and hopes. Her feminine nature could not exactly feel his confidence, however; and her father's prejudices and passions served to prevent her from any unnecessary dis-

play of her sympathies. That her lover wore the patriot colors, was perhaps an additional reason for the faith which she entertained in the cause of liberty. She was a willing listener to her brother. Her soul was an ardent one, and she lent an eager ear to his narratives of the struggle in sundry places. He brought down the progress of the war to the present moment, for her satisfaction; and she soon learned to feel all his confidence. That she was gentle and submissive when with him—and with her father—that she could sympathize with the one, and forbear silently with the other, were only in proof of her filial and sisterly affections. In some degree, she partook of the courage of her race; and she loved, much more than she could excuse to herself, the exciting story of the wild struggle, the gallant charge, the audacious adventure, and the wild attack. So earnestly engaged were the two in these narratives, that the signals of Little Peter, at the chamber-door, were thrice repeated, before they gave ear to his desire to communicate with them. When he was admitted, he said:—

"Benny Bowlegs, Mass Willie—bin sen' me. He de look out. He say 'trange looking pusson is a-coming! He pull down de rye fiel' fence; he da come round by de garden. He hab big bone black hoss, and he 'tan [stands] close in de tick, at de bottom ob de garden, as ef he bin da look out for see wha's a doing yer. Benny say you must keep close. He da watch de pusson and will nebber leff 'em out ob sight."

"Where's Benny?"

"He da follow close on de track ob de 'trange pusson, cub bering hese'f in de tick [thicket] for watch 'em."

"Very good. Keep close, Peter, and don't let yourself be seen, unless the stranger comes up to the house. Should he want to see my father, admit him, but don't be out of reach and hearing. The fellow's coming in on the rear is suspicious! Can it be one of these rascals? Hardly! He would hardly venture thus! What can be the fellow's policy? If Blodgit has reported me absent, they would certainly seek for me below. If I am supposed to be here, *one* of them, alone, would hardly make the venture. You did not see the fellow, yourself, Peter?"

"Nebber sh'um [see him] maussa. Benny sh'um, and tell

me. He da hide in de t'ick, bottom ob de garden. Benny hide in de t'ick behin' em, for see wha' he guine do. Arter Benny tell me, den he gone for hide."

"Very well! keep about the house, and see what the fellow wants, should he approach. I will be on the alert, and keep as close as possible. All right! Go now!"

Peter disappeared.

"Who can it be?" said Carrie, uneasily.

"As it is but a single man," answered Willie, "there can be no cause for uneasiness. Still, if it be one of these outlaws, they may have some deeper schemes in agitation than I can at present conceive. If I could get a glimpse of the fellow, on his approach, it might give me a clue to his purpose."

And he rose, and looked at the priming of his pistols.

"He is making his way from the rear. I'll tell you what, Carrie, I'll steal through the passage down the private stairs, and conceal myself in the pantry. That will enable me to look out upon the rear, unseen. Do you go first, and see if the coast is clear. It will not do to meet my father now!"

This was done; the moment for descending the stairs was propitious—Colonel Sinclair still brooded in the breakfast room, with little Lottie, playing with her doll, before his eyes—and Willie stole down the private stairway into the pantry, through the sheltering blinds of which he could note all the approaches in the rear of the dwelling, yet remain unseen himself. Here Carrie left him, proceeding to the breakfast-room, whence she would have persuaded little Lottie off to her lessons; but the old man raised his eyes, and mildly said:—

"Leave her for a while, Carrie. It does me good to see her play, and hear her prattle. An hour hence will serve every purpose."

Carrie was very anxious to get Lottie up stairs, and out of the way of danger, but her argument failed with the old man, and she did not venture to declare the apprehensions which she entertained. She rejoined Willie, and he pacified her uneasiness.

"Do not feel troubled, Carrie. I shall not fail you, you know. If there is any danger, Lottie may be sent out of the way at any moment. This fellow, whoever he is, may be ap-

proaching on some such mission as that of Blodgit. At all events, there is but one of them, and I fancy I shall be quite enough to manage him."

"But why let him approach at all, Willie? Why not show yourself armed—all the muskets are here, you know, and father's rifle hangs in the hall—and warn him off at the muzzle of your gun?"

"You forget, Carrie, that my purpose is concealment for the present. Besides, if I show myself at door or window, who knows what rifle-shots I may draw. The dwelling may be reached from the forest-cover by a good rifle; and the fellow, who comes alone, is probably protected in his progress by good marksmen. No! no! It is best and safest to let the one rascal come and empty his budget. We may get something out of him which it will be useful to know. My game is to get intelligence. I have been doing this very business, day and night, for Marion, for the last three weeks, and there is much which I would learn of this neighborhood and Orangeburg, which I could not get from a better source than this promises to be. Don't you become fidgety, now. Come, you are a brave girl, and you must exert yourself to keep quiet. Benny Bowlegs knows his business, and will come to my succor should he be needed. See here, my horn is ready to sound for him; and Little Peter is sufficiently watchful of Benny to play his part manfully. All's safe, believe me; only, as I must hold myself as much from sight as possible, it will not do to let this fellow suspect my presence. We must wait events. Be sure, however, that, so soon as it becomes necessary, I shall make my appearance. To lie quiet now is the best way to get these rascals into my power."

"But what do you want with them? Why not scare them off?"

"Ah! you are not yet a soldier! You can't scare these fellows off! If I did so now, they would be upon you as soon as I disappear. No! no! Better take them, and pare off their claws. They are giving us an opportunity to do so; and only because they take for granted that I am now skulking in yonder forest. Shall I balk them? No! no! Carrie! I hope to bag every rascal of the gang before nightfall!"

This language encouraged the sister; and she hurried up to her chamber, from the window of which she kept watch upon the approach along the avenue, according to her brother's instructions.

Willis Sinclair never for a moment left his own place of watch. But he was not kept long in expectation. The outlaw made his appearance, emerging from the rear of the garden. Sinclair recognised him in a moment.

"The audacious scoundrel!" he muttered. "It is just the character of the wretch! I see! He knows how feeble my father is. Bledgit has told him all; and he supposes me to be below. He comes with open eyes, in broad daylight, and into the trap. Wolf! It shall be a dead-fall!"

And, with the utmost coolness, Sinclair disposed his pistols upon the table, cocked and ready; and drew his sabre so gently as that no sounds should reach his father's senses in the adjoining room. The naked weapon he leaned up in the corner, convenient to the grasp, should he need to dart through the door separating the two apartments. This was ajar—just wide enough to admit of a hand—and could be thrown open, without noise, in a moment. He took off his spurs, and laid them carefully aside. His moccasined feet gave forth no sound. Opening the bosom of his hunting-shirt, he felt for the handle of his *couteau de chasse*, and satisfied himself that it lay easy to his grasp. These things done, he composed himself quietly, to wait the progress of events. He was too old a soldier to endeavor to precipitate them. He resumed his watch at the window-blind, and noted the deliberate progress of the outlaw, as he rode up to a tree, dismounted, flung his bridle over a swinging limb, and marched boldly and heavily up the back stairway into the great passage of the dwelling.

It would have been quite easy for Sinclair to have shot him down at any moment, on this progress; but Willie did not delight in deliberate bloodshed. He would have felt a degree of shame at such a procedure. Besides, though an outlaw, Dick of Tophet might now design no evil. At all events, there was sufficient time to ascertain his purposes; and these purposes it was quite important that our major should learn. There was yet another consideration. To act, in any way decisively, in

the business, without suffering the felon hands of the outlaw to be seen, was to involve himself more deeply with his father. Dick was ostensibly a king's man, and Colonel Sinclair would require some very certain evidence before he would believe him capable of designing evil to himself or family. The good old man fancied that every professing loyalist entertained the same reverence for regal authority which filled his own bosom.

All these thoughts passed through Willie Sinclair's mind as the outlaw approached; but he smiled to himself as he said:—

"But he will soon grow wiser! Hell-fire Dick, believing himself secure, will not long delay to show his true colors. I have a long score with the scoundrel. It will go hard with me, but I pay him off to-day!"

CHAPTER XIV.

RANSOM.

NEVER was good old gentleman, in the full enjoyment of the *otium cum dignitate*, less prepared for further disquiet that morning, than our sturdy Baron of Sinclair. The previous events of the day had had the effect of subduing his mood to one of a quiet, if not a pleasant melancholy. The excitement occasioned by the supposed danger of his son had not exactly passed away; but remained in some degree a cause of thought and meditation. The old man was brooding over past and present, anxious and somewhat weary—not so much vexed as sad—musing upon disappointed expectations, and with those doubts of his own, and the future of his family, which his very confidence in the ultimate success of the king's arms, was calculated to awaken. But his general temper was subdued for a season. He was partly exhausted by his previous excitement, and a brief forbearance, on the part of his gout, had left him in a degree of ease of body, in which his mind could brood without suffering. His features were now mild. His eyes watched the play of little Lottie, and he sometimes answered her little queries, with a childish prattle like her own. Suddenly, the child approached him with a bound, inspiring him with the utmost terrors for his foot. He could not stir a peg, and so sensitive and nervous had he become on the subject of this delicate member, that he waved her off with both hands as he cried aloud:—

"Keep off, Lottie, if you would not hear papa squall out."

"Would it hurt you so very, very much, papa?"

"Don't you think, Lottie, that it must be a very great hurt, indeed, that would make papa squall out as you sometimes do?"

"As I did t'other night, papa, when the bat flew into the

window, and almost into my face. But that was only from scare, papa. It just brushed my shoulder with its wings."

"Yes, Lottie, and it scares me almost as much when you come bounding about my sore foot like a young kitten."

"But I wouldn't hurt your foot, papa, for anything. Why don't you let me nurse your foot? I'd like to help sister Carrie when she dresses it and binds it up for you in the morning and at night. I can dress it I'm sure, just as good as sis. Look at my little Sophy now. See how I've dressed her, and she knows how well she looks. Don't you see how big her eyes are, and how proud she is? And this is all my dressing. I dress her a dozen times a day, and know just how to put on everything. And won't you let me dress your poor old foot as well as sis?"

"Ah! you are not yet able for that, Lottie. Some day, perhaps, if papa lives till you have grown a young lady, we shall then see what sort of nurse you will make."

"Thank you, papa! I shall be so glad." And as she drew close to his side, he put his arm about and kissed her. The old soldier was not always stormy."

"There now, Lottie, go to your playthings, my dear; I feel nothing but fear and trembling when you are skipping about me. And yet, Lottie, I would not that you should cease to skip—only skip away—afar off!"

"I won't skip, papa—I won't go near your foot. I wouldn't hurt you for anything."

"Not designedly, Lottie—you would not. But children are careless and thoughtless little creatures, and they frequently do mischief without meaning it. You did not mean to let the parrot out, Lottie; nor to break the big glass shade; nor to upset and break my physic bottle; nor to tumble out of the piazza;—nor to—"

"Oh! papa, don't tell everything. How can you remember everything against me so?"

"I wish *you* to remember, Lottie."

"But I don't wish to remember, papa. I don't like it. It makes me feel so ashamed."

"And this feeling of shame is a good thing sometimes, Lottie, and it is very well, so long as little girls and boys can feel it.

It will be worse for them, if the time should ever come, when they cease to feel it. But, go to your play, my child. I love to see you play."

"I am not playing now, papa; I'm *working!* See what a beautiful dress I've just made for little Sophy. I made it all myself. Sis only cut it out."

"Very pretty! How many of your sister's dresses have you cut up, Lottie, making frocks for little Sophy that never feels the cold?"

"Oh! we don't cut up any except when they're not fit to be worn any more. Sis don't let me. But, papa, do you really like to see me about you, and hear me prattle, as you call it?"

"To hear you prattle, very much; to see you too; but not too near my feet, Lottie;—that's all—remember that!"—seeing the child again approaching him.

"Do you want to hear the song I've just learned, papa? Sis taught me. It's so sweet and pretty—all about

"The little gray squirrel sat in the green tree,
And I looked at him and he looked at me,—
And he said, 'Little girl, do you like as you look?'
That saucy gray squirrel upon the green tree."

"A saucy little squirrel, indeed;—but enough of the song now, Lottie. Some other time you shall sing it all for me. No doubt it is a very pretty song, if Carrie taught you, for she knows how to sing pretty songs, and to make them too."

"She made that one, papa; and she made another that she sings herself, all about

"A handsome cavalier—"

"Ha! ha! so she sings of handsome cavaliers, does she? and you would like to sing of a handsome cavalier too, would you?"

"Yes, if sis would only teach me, but she won't teach me that song. But I mean to watch her, and listen, when she isn't thinking, papa, and I'll learn it all by myself."

"What! stratagem already? And do you remember nothing more about that handsome cavalier?"

"Not much—it is something about 'a handsome cavalier,' and 'a baldric blue,' and how 'He rode at early dawn.'"

"Only, I suppose, to brush the morning dew? Well, it won't do to mangle your sister's verses; so when you have stolen them from her tongue, then come, Lottie, and hide them away in papa's ear, and we'll enjoy the stolen fruit together."

"Oh! yes, papa! That will be so nice. Won't it make sissi open her eyes when she hears it?"

"And her ears too, if you sing as loudly as you talk, Lottie. But look out my child, and see who it is in the back piazza. I hear a strange voice and footsteps."

"I don't hear anything, papa."

"Go, see, little Lottie, and come tell papa."

The child put down her toys and disappeared in the passage. Her prattle had not prepared the veteran for the sort of visiter he was now required to entertain. Scarcely a moment had elapsed when the child ran back, crying aloud:—

"Oh, papa, a strange man, and so ugly!"

"Not so blasted ugly either, little Minny!" exclaimed Dick of Tophet, who had followed close behind her, and heard her speech distinctly. He entered the room speaking, dashed his cap down upon the table, and threw himself into a chair directly opposite the cushioned feet of the colonel. The veteran opened his eyes widely at the apparition.

"How are you, old buck, this warm weather?"

Never was mortal astonishment greater than that of our baron at this impudent intrusion and speech. Little Lottie disappeared in terror, flying up stairs. For a moment the colonel was absolutely speechless. The other resumed:—

"I say, how are you, old buck, this hot weather?"

"Who the devil are *you?*" demanded Sinclair, finding his tongue in his increasing indignation.

"The devil himself, if you choose, come to look after his people! How are *you*, I say, in this brimstone weather?"

The colonel stretched out his hand to possess himself of his gold-headed cane, the only weapon near him. His purpose was apparent in his eye. But the ruffian was too quick for him, and too watchful. He had only to thrust out his arm, to send the cane away beyond the old man's reach. It was a heavy weapon of rosewood, and rolled along smoothly over the mahogany, until it made a final plunge from the table to the floor

The fury of the colonel may be conjectured — not easily described. He made an involuntary effort to rise; but Dick of Tophet had a formidable ally in that great toe; and a sudden terrible twinge in the member at once taught the veteran his utter helplessness. He roared out:—

"Halloo, there! Benny! Little Peter!"

"You waste the wind, old fellow, that would cool your hominy. The niggers are all off, you remember, looking for your son's body."

"My son's body? My son!—"

"Yes! He that was murdered last night by Pete Blodgit and Hell-fire Dick, you know. Ha! ha! ha! And you believed that story, old boy? Well, if it will be any consolation to you to know, then I'll tell you that your son's safe for the present. He's in powerful good hands. We've caught him, the young rebel, and he's in a close hitch, under a good-sized hickory, not half a mile off. He is still alive, and kicking; but whether he'll live another hour, all depends on you! I've come to see how much ransom you're ready to pay down—guineas—on the hub! How much would do you valley his neck at?"

The father's agonies came back.

"Do you tell me that my son is a prisoner?"

"Fast in a fix—tight as a blacksmith's vice!"

"To whom is he a prisoner?"

"Why, to me and my brother sodgers, to be sure!"

"And who are you?"

"Who am I? That's a pretty question. I thought the ve looks of me was enough to let common people know who I am. But you don't count yourself among common people, I remember. You're a great harrystocrat, and can't see and feel as common people do! Well, I'll teach you who I am; and if you won't, I'am it by common word of mouth. I've many other ways of giving you understanding before I'm done with you. Look at me, good, old fellow, and you see Jack Andrews—that's my natural name, you see, that I got from my dad and the parson; but if you really wan's to know me, as the common people knows me, then I'm 'Hell-fire Dick,' at your service!"

The outlaw seemed to entertain a certain pride in his fearful *nom de guerre*, and his head was uplifted, and his arm stretched out, with a sort of theatrical dignity, as he concluded.

"And are *you* that bloody villain?"

"Come! come! no bloody compliments, you old heathen harrystocrat! Keep a civil tongue in your head! You're speaking to one of his majesty's off'cers, let me tell you; and, more than that, as I tell'd you before, your rebel son's neck is at the eend of my stirrup-leather. So, be as decent as you kin be, of you have a mind to his salvation."

"You in his majesty's service?"

"To be sure—why not? Don't you think I kin cut and slash as well as Tarleton? and of you ever seed Huck, you'll say I'm jest as good-looking a person."

"In his majesty's commission!—never!"

"Why, you bloody old rebel! do you doubt my word?"

"Rebel! Oh! scoundrel, if I could get at you!" And the veteran writhed in his chair, from the double pangs of gout and indignation.

"'Twouldn't help you much, old fellow, of you could. I could lay you out with a single wipe. So you needn't get into a passion, and I don't mean to let you put me in one. I'm as cool as blazes. You see I've got your rebel son in a hitch—him and you both, pretty much in the same sort of fix—he to a hick'ry, and you to a harm-chair—got you both jest where I wants you;—and so I kin afford to let your tongue wag a bit. When you're tired, you kin listen. But don't go too far and talk too long; for I hain't got much time to be wasting upon you, and I ain't the most easy-tempered person in a marning righteous. I jest wants you to see your true sitivation, and Willie Sinclair's sitivation; and then we'll talk about the terms. For short then, you're to understand, that, of you wants to get him out of the rope, you've got one thing to do—pay up—shell out—empty!"

And the outlaw accompanied his speech with suitable action, showing the process of dispersing from purse and pocket.

The fierce old colonel, "angry to kill," was yet enough of the old soldier to discover that he was truly "in a hitch," as the ruffian described his own and son's "sitivation." He was held

at fearful vantage by his visiter. He had no weapon—the faithful staff was taken from his hands—and he was a prisoner in his chair! His gouty foot kept him in continual anxiety; for the action of the outlaw brought him, at times, into fearful propinquity with the diseased member. What was to be done? Proud as was his stomach, and fierce his courage, his only hope lay in temporizing with the ruffian, until he could procure succor. Yet, if it were true that his two faithful negroes were absent from the plantation, in a fruitless search after a son who was a prisoner at hand, and threatened with the halter—where was his hope? The cold sweat broke out in thick drops over the old man's face. He was in that condition, which Benny described as one in which he frequently found him—ready to boil over. But, though ready to boil over, he did not dare to suffer that operation now; and to keep down the steam of his passion, at high pressure, required all his strength of soul and body upon the valve. It was amusing, under the circumstances, to witness his labored efforts to look and speak with becoming moderation, if not mildness.

"Heu! and so—you say, sir—that—a—you are a king's man—an officer in his majesty's service?"

"Ah! your tune changes, does it? You kin be civil of your tongue when it pleases you! That's always the way with you overbearing harrystocrats. When you've got the whip-hand of a body, you're all thunder; but when you're flat on your backs, you kin lick the hand of a poor man—ay, and wash his feet for him!"

Oh! how the proud man writhed in his torture of mind and body! The other proceeded—

"But what's it to you, ef I'm king's or liberty man! I'm king myself, hyar, jest now; and I kin hev *your* neck and your son's neck both, ef I please, in a short halter, under a spreading limb. And who's to say 'stop,' ef I say 'swing.' Kain't you understand yit? That's your stivation. And now for your son's ransom. What do you say to that? Perk up steady!"

The old man recovered his dignity, though he spoke with bitterness. There was a degree of humiliation, to which neither his own, nor his son's danger, could bend his soul.

"Verily, what matters it what you are, when I am thus I am at any man's mercy! I can neither fight nor fly!"

"That's the hitch! Didn't I say that you were in a fix, tight as any blacksmith's vice?"

"You call yourself a British officer? It may be so—though it will be very long before I shall persuade myself that his majesty trusts his commission to such a person as yourself!"

"Take care, old fellow! Every imperdent speech of yourn, adds so much to the ransom. Mind what you're saying?"

The colonel simply waved his hand impatiently, and continued:—

"If you are a British officer, and my son is your prisoner, you have no power upon his life. Take him to the nearest post, and lodge him in prison. There ends your duty. You have no right either to hang or ransom."

"Don't tell me of rights, old Billzebub! My right is hyar, and hyar!"—touching the pistols and knife at his girdle—"and these rights, hyar, old fiddlestick, kin take your ears off, and slit your pipe for you, as easy as talking! You're my prisoner, too, I'll let you know, you d—d old rebel, and I'll hev' a ransom out of you for all the family, gal-children and all, jest the same as for your son, before I let a hair of one of 'em out of my hands!"

The steam became terribly eager for escape; the valves could not endure the strain; they yielded.

"Rebel!" roared the colonel, his loyalty irritated beyond measure. "Rebel! villain!"

"To be sure, and a d—d imperdent one at that! Look you, old Sinkler, I knows you well, and all your kidney. You're one of them bloody, proud, heathen harrystocrats, that look upon a poor man, without edication, as no better than a sort of two-legged dog, that you kin lay the lash on whenever you see him lying in the doorway. And your son is jest another sich a tyrant heathen! And you've had a long swing between you, living on the fat of the land, and riding roughshod over poor men's backs. But thar's a great change, thanks to the king's marcies! and the good time for the poor man's come at last!—and, now, we've got a-top of the wheel! We've got the chance at the good things of this life; and we kin pay off

old scores, wagon-whip and hickory, agin your nice gould-headed cane! And I'll make you feel both afore I'm done with you! I'll hev' you, and all your family, on your marrow-bones before me; or the rope shall stretch with the weight of some of you; and them we don't hang to the swinging limb, we may stretch in some other way! So look you, by the old Satan, and Billzebub, and all other devils, the blackest that ever come out of the infarnal pit, I swear that you shall buckle down to me to-day! Pay up—let's have your gould and silver, and plate—call down them gal-children—I want to look at 'em close;—call 'em, I say, and jest you prepare to give up all I axes, or it's a short cord for you, and no time for grace."

The boiler burst!

The strain upon it could be borne no longer! With a desperate effort, the veteran, defying pain, strove to rise. All now was iron in his face and soul. The energy and courage of fifty years reanimated him. His eyes, unblinking, were fastened upon those of the insolent ruffian, with the deadly intensity of the rattlesnake. Could looks slay, that one glance would have been fatal to the wretch. The gout was forgotten! He rose to his feet, and appeared about to throw himself upon the outlaw, when his limbs failed; and, though his agony forced not a groan from his bosom, he caught upon the leaf of the table, and sank back into his chair.

For a moment speechless from pain, he hushed every other acknowledgment of his sufferings, and recovering himself as rapidly as possible, with eyes as stern, and voice as firm, as if he were superior to any torture, he exclaimed—

"Dog! wretch! reptile! I spit upon and defy you!"

And he seconded the speech with the appropriate action. It was all of which he was capable. Of course, he looked for the death-stroke in another moment. But his brave soul was unblenching, and his eye sternly braved that of the executioner, with all the loathing scorn which belonged to the indignity to which he had subjected him.

With mixed howl and scream, like that of some wild beast goaded with spear and fire, the ruffian started to his feet, drew his knife, and was about to spring upon his victim! But, even as he leaped he fell!

There was a slight rush from without—a rustle rather—a movement so light and rapid as to seem a flash—then a blow was heard, dull and heavy—and a fall! The outlaw reeled incontinently backward, sunk hopelessly against the table, bore it down with him in a general crash, and lay prostrate—the blood gushing from mouth and ears—stunned and silent upon the floor!

CHAPTER XV.

THE FAMILY GROUP AT THE BARONY.

The whole affair was over in a moment. It had passed so rapidly that the colonel had not recovered himself quite—not enough for comment—when he beheld the stranger, to whose timely blow he owed his life, stoop down to the stunned and bleeding ruffian, and proceed to strip him of knife and pistols.

"Who is it," he cried, "to whom I owe this help? Ha! ha! my good fellow, whoever you are, you have taken lessons in a first-rate British school! That buffet was delivered with proper science; well aimed to rake the ear upward! The arm duly shortened for delivery, the whole body working upon a pivot; and the whole weight thrown into right arm and shoulder! I have tried—I have taught—that blow, a thousand times myself! Where did you learn it, my brave fellow? Who are you?"

"What! don't you know me, father?"

"Ha! Willie! Willie, my son! Is it you? God be praised—you are safe!"

Then, with entirely changed voice:—

"But how the devil should I know you in that villanous dress? Is that a costume fit for a gentleman, or a gentleman's son? Is that the uniform which your rebel authorities provide? At least, they have some idea of propriety. The dress suits the rabble."

"I'll answer you directly, sir," said Willie Sinclair, "as soon as this rogue is properly roped."

By this time both Carrie and Lottie had rushed down stairs. They stood with their arms about the neck of the veteran. But Willie Sinclair, speaking in the voice of authority, sent them off.

"Back, Carrie; take Lottie with you! Back to your perch, and keep a sharp lookout! We may have the rest of the outlaws upon us before we know where we are. Back! Lose not a moment; I will sound for Benny and Peter!

Thus speaking, Willie Sinclair winded his horn merrily, while stooping over the prostrate ruffian whom he had entirely disarmed. He did not forego his vigilance a moment. The fellow was still insensible. At least, he made no motion, lying upon his side, with the blood still trickling from his ear. In truth, it was a formidable blow—scarcely to be conceived by those who are ignorant of the degree of power which one versed in "the science" can throw into a muscular right arm. But the rogue might be "playing possum" nevertheless. Such fellows are tough, and capable of enduring many such buffets.

"Have you killed him?" asked the old man.

"No! His fate saves him from that! The gallows is not to be defrauded of its prey! He is only stunned."

"A good blow, Willie—well delivered! I taught you the stroke myself. I remember all our practice."

"Yes, indeed! and I thank you for the lesson, sir. It has served a good purpose!"

"Ay, sir; and it is such as you, thus daily receiving proofs of their admirable excellence, who would be for abandoning all our best British institutions!"

The young man laughed merrily at the solemn imputation, as he answered:—

"It seems not, sir. You see that I keep some of them in full practice."

At this moment Benny and Little Peter both appeared.

"A plough-line, Benny!" cried the major.

"You kill de blackguard, Mass Willie?"

"No! He is recovering! A plough-line!"

Benny was already prepared, and, with Peter's assistance, the outlaw was roped tightly, hands and feet, and turned upon his back, quiet as a turtle in like predicament.

"The bloody scoundrel!"—quoth the old man. "He had *me* in a hitch, as he phrased it! But his present one seems rather of the tightest fashion!"

"He no guine get out ob *dis* hitch, mass kurnel, wha' *I* put

em in, by he own teet' and fingers!" said Benny, with great complacency, putting his foot irreverently into the sides of the outlaw.

Dick of Tophet now opened his eyes, which were very glassy, and one of them bloodshot. They did not exhibit much intelligence, but took in the surrounding aspects slowly, and with a stupid sort of stare. Gradually, he seemed to be recovering his senses. He endeavored to draw up his legs and stretch out his arms; and thus acquired a full knowledge of his bonds. His constraints brought back his consciousness. He felt his "sitivation" evidently; but he was too old a ruffian—of a nature quite too hard—to *shew* any fear or feeling. He stared steadily into the faces about him, with a sort of scowling unconcern.

"Take him off to the lower story, boys," said Willie, "and give him a taste of rum, or brandy. Soak a cloth with the liquor, and put a bandage about his head. Then be off, on your watch again!"

The negroes swung the outlaw up, by arms and feet, and he was carried down into the brick basement of the dwelling. His head was bandaged, and he eagerly swallowed the liquor that was poured down his throat. Willie Sinclair, having seen him safely shut up, returned to the dining-room. Carrie and Lottie were also now permitted to come down to the *reüsion* of the family, as soon as the two negroes had resumed their places of watch. Was that reunion now to be a grateful one? We shall see.

Once more the baron sate with all his children around him. He had resumed his composure. His cushions were restored; his game leg was again put at ease—and the two girls safe beside him. Willie Sinclair took a seat as composedly as the outlaw had done, occupying nearly the same situation, directly in front of his father; and the two surveyed each other for a while, without speaking. At length the old man broke silence:—

"So, sir—you think you have done great things by your performances to-day!"

"Not great, sir. If I think about the matter at all, with any gratification, it is only because I have been able to be of some

little service, sir, where I owe much duty, and feel the most unbounded love."

"*Little* service, sir! You saved my life!"

"Very likely, sir. I think so!"

"You came in the nick of time, Willie Sinclair:—in the very nick of time;—but why were you absent at any time? That is the question, sir!"

"It is one, sir, that we need not reargue."

"Well, sir, as you please," said the other stiffly. "To shrink from arguing one's own cause is, perhaps, the best evidence of its worthlessness!—and I am willing to admit, sir, that you delivered an admirable buffet;—not only well-timed, but well delivered! But *who* taught you *that* buffet, sir? Who was it that had you carefully lessoned by the best boxer in old England? Shame on you, sir; shame on you—to fly in the face of your teacher, and strike at the very bosom from which you drew your nurture!"

"My dear father—let us talk of something more pleasant to both parties. It is not often that we meet, and you know that we shall never agree upon this subject. Let us think of more grateful topics. And, to begin, pray, let me ask—have you none of that old Madeira left, sir—Hopson's brand—that famous pale old Madeira? I confess my mouth waters for a smack of that gentle creature. She was always a favorite of mine, and after the rough work of the last half hour, I feel as if she would be particularly grateful to my palate!"

"What! do the tastes of a gentleman still survive in the bosom of a rapscallion rebel? They should be encouraged. Get us a bottle, Carrie, my dear, out of the garret. You know the brand. Don't shake. Decant it carefully. The fellow deserves a drink—the best reward, perhaps, of a prize-fighter."

And the veteran laughed—with a merry twinkle in his great blue eye—arched as it was with bushy brows—and a pleasant twist of his still rosy lips. Who could fancy beneath that countenance a hard and relentless nature? Who could fail to see, in that genial smile, that his son was the apple of his eye? Nature was declaring herself at this moment, at every natural. The old man was by no means so tough as at forty-five. The excitements of the day—his gout—all had unsettled him; and

his mind, in its workings—a combative and pugnacious mind—was in temporary suspension. The blood, the heart, were comparatively at liberty to argue as they pleased, and they took advantage of the opportunity.

But not for long! Willie Sinclair had outraged all the old man's notions of propriety—his faith, his loyalty—the prescriptive pride of numerous generations—his own individual sentiments and feelings, which a social aristocracy had long nourished into absolute laws. Besides, our veteran was of pure Saxon—sanguine temperament. He was off in a flash! never long at one point, constantly veering with every impulse, and no more to be *fixed* than the well-oiled vane upon the house-top. Don't suppose, by this, that we mean to describe him as capricious of principle—only of emotion. Never was man more honorable, or more steadfast to the polar star of truth and justice, than the elder Willie Sinclair. We have seen, that, with death staring him in the face, without help or remedy, he yet scorned to make a single concession, for safety, to the brutal and exacting insolence of the outlaw whose knife threatened his throat. Death, by any process, was preferable to this! Though our colonel was obedient to his impulses, yet these impulses were all tuned and regulated by his habitual recognition of moral and social law. All his *instincts*—and there are moral as well as animal instincts—pity that we study them so little, or so seldom allow for them—were those of justice, faith, loyalty! He was a good sample of the best English squirearchy, when the squirearchy of England was legitimate—in the days of Falkland and Hampden—frank, hearty, honest—stubborn, it may be, for stubbornness is somewhat necessary to virtue itself—but no *simulacrum*—no mere sham, the miserable mockery, not the semblance, of what was an honored and a living thing.

The wine was brought, bright, clear, amber-like, and smiling through the crystal glass like evening sunshine in the eyes of beauty.

"Shall I fill for you, sir?" quoth the major, taking up the decanter.

"It is scarce possible to deny myself," answered the veteran, "yet"—with a grunt—"I shall pay the penalty if I drink.

This confounded gout. It destroys all the finer tastes of the gentleman."

"His privileges rather," answered the son. "But one glass will hardly trouble you, and I doubt if this bright liquor is a bit more unfriendly to the gout than your tea and coffee."

"What do you know about the matter, sir?—but fill,—fill! I will venture upon a single glass only, and shall hope for immunity in sinning as from necessity, I forbear the full extent of my desires. There was a time, Willie, when I could no more have paused, the taste once taken, till the bottle was empty, than I could have flown. Sir,—the king's health! Will you drink that?"

"Ay, sir, why not! You do not object to my additional wish that he may soon attain his proper senses and temper, as well as his health."

"D—n your amendment, sir, and drink as you please! There will never be an increase of sense in your case, I fear."

"Well, sir, that should trouble neither of us so long as what I have suffices for the preservation of my tastes. You see, I have by no means lost my relish for this goodly spirit," and he refilled his glass as he spoke.

"What do they give you to drink in camp?"

"Oh! I shall puzzle you! We have a beverage in camp, sir—that is when we have any, that is probably very much like the nectar of the ancients,—born of the sun and of the dew,—of night and noonday in equal proportions;—which at once fires and subdues;—wings you to the stars, yet puts you comfortably to sleep on a bed of earth that does not need to be spread with moss."

"You are not speaking of Jamaica?"

"No, sir: I rather prefer the Jamaica when I can get it, to this potent liquor. The Jamaica is not without other qualities which I somewhat affect. But our opportunities of judging of the one are too infrequent to prevent us from a very warm appreciation of the other——"

"It is Hollands!"

"No! It's birthplace is much more picturesque. There is a beautiful river, sir, of our sister state, Virginia——"

"Colony, sir——"

"As you please—state or colony—the political position of the region has no sort of effect upon the qualities of this goodly beverage, which derives its popular name from a beautiful river of Virginia, which rises among the Laurel mountains—famous birthplace—runs north for three hundred miles, and loses itself at last in the Ohio, which it infuses with new virtues. Its waters are not waters, but virtues, or they fable greatly who tell us that this beverage either oozes from its banks, or is borne onward undiluted by its currents. It is scooped up——"

"What nonsense! What is the name of this river?"

With profound gravity the other replied to the question:—

"Monongahela!"

"Pshaw! and you have been prating all the time of whiskey!—the most infernal of all drinks that burn up human vitals! No wonder you smack your lips with new life at the taste of Madeira."

"You are right, sir. Monongahela, though quite popular in camp, is by no means a favorite of mine. In spite of its divine origin and pretty name, I prefer Madeira. Sir, I do myself the honor to drink the health of my father in a bumper."

And the action seconded the word.

"Faith, Willie, at this rate, you will need no help of mine in finishing the bottle. But you are welcome. It will help to show you what you forfeit by your insane politics. By the way, talking of your camp—have you any camp left anywhere?—any foothold, swamp or highland, in which you keep your ground? If I err not, Lord Rawdon, at last advices, had driven your Yankee general wholly out of sight. And these garments in which you now appear! Tell me, my son, are you not a fugitive?"

This was said with great concern. Meanwhile, our major of dragoons had taken little Lottie into his arms, and she was perched upon his knee, with her head nestling lovingly on his shoulder.

"A fugitive!"

"Ay, sir, a fugitive—flying from danger—pursued by superior forces—your own forces utterly dispersed—a rebel in danger of the rope—a fugitive from justice!"

The major put down the child, and rubbed his hands merrily.

"Well, sir, you will give me shelter?"

"I know not that I do not make myself criminal in doing so; but I trust, sir, that I am not without influence in his majesty's army—my known loyalty—my past services—will enable me, I trust, to secure your safety—your pardon. But only on condition, Willie, that you are truly repentant—that you renounce your rascally associates——"

"It does not need, my dear father. I trust that I shall never seek to purchase mere safety by the sacrifice of honor; trust still more earnestly that my father will never descend to the necessity of proposing or encouraging such sacrifice."

The father absolutely groaned, whether from gout or reflection it is not needful that we inquire. The major of dragoons continued:—

"No, sir; I am in no sort of danger. The only representatives of his Britannic majesty in these precincts at present are of a class that is much more apt to endanger you than me. You have had a taste of the quality to-day."

"What, sir, you do not pretend to say that this atrocious outlaw serves under the standard of my sovereign?"

"You heard his own boast to that effect."

"But he lied, sir—lied in his throat. He is a scoundrel, an outlaw, a miserable marauder and plunderer."

"Very true; but it is not the less true that he has been, and is still, I believe, in the service of the British general. He is absolutely a sort of officer, and was, to my knowledge, at one time, a sergeant of that efficient corps of rangers to which his lordship of Rawdon and Moira gave the title of Congaree foragers."

"Lord Rawdon employ such rascals—never!"

"Nay, his lordship is not in a situation to scruple at any qualities in his levies. He is only too well pleased to fill the gaps in his regiments with any sort of cattle. His lordship thinks with Falstaff, that, if good for nothing else, they are at least excellent food for powder."

"Do you mean to say, sir, that there is a lack of troops in the British army?"

"A most alarming one."

"Since when? He has a force, I am sure, quite adequate to all his purposes."

"Yes—if they be retreat, flight, and the loss of the country—adequate to nothing else, sir."

"What! and when he has just driven your Yankee blacksmith general out of sight—out of the colony!"

"You get intelligence slowly here, my dear father, or it is manufactured at the wrong mint. Are you not aware that Lord Rawdon has abandoned Ninety-Six, almost as soon as he relieved it?"

"The devil he has! I don't—I won't believe a word of it."

"Very well! You will see in sufficient season for yourself. Why, sir, he is even now in full retreat; and now, Colonel Cruger is only lingering at Ninety-Six to collect the loyalists and all their families, and bring them off from a region which has grown quite too hot to hold them. We are soon about to witness the melancholy spectacle of the exodus from their homes of an entire colony, men, women, and children, numbering thousands, who, committed to the fortunes of the British army, are destined to share and anticipate their fate."

"Pooh! pooh! all this is simply ridiculous."

"Why, sir, have you not seen the fall, one by one, of every British post in the interior. Rawdon abandons and burns Camden—Forts Watson, Motte—the posts at Granby, Augusta, and Silver Bluff, all succumb;—by a prodigious effort, employing almost all his force, leaving Charleston to a guard rather than a garrison, he relieves Ninety-Six, and that he is obliged to abandon also. In a few days he will reach the Congarees in full retreat; and you may look to see him making a post of rest, before long, of Orangeburg, or possibly, the Sinclair Barony, on his flight to the seaboard."

"Spite of all disaster, sir, Lord Rawdon shall be welcome to Sinclair Barony, and if need be, to avert the event which you threaten, its master and all his slaves shall arm for the crown. It is not in a moment of peril that I will abandon that standard under which I have grown to manhood."

"I should be the last person in the world, my father, to wish to see you do so. God forbid that in any exigency a man should abandon his principles. You see things with other eyes

than mine, and you see them honestly, though, as I think, through a false medium. But you are to adhere to what you recognise as true. You, sir, must also feel that I am required by the laws of conscience to obey a similar necessity. It is a melancholy necessity, my dear father, which divides us in this war, but it is not the less a necessity with both—one which duly results from the very exercise of the best virtues. Believe me, sir, you can not have endured more mortification than I have pain, in the choice which renders me heedless of your sympathies and desires."

"Ah! Willie, Willie!" murmured the veteran tenderly—"it is a cruel, cruel dispensation. Why, my son, could you not feel with me, think with me, follow the course which I have taken, sustain the banner which I have borne?"

"It could not be, sir! What was right with you, and in your day, would be wrong in mine."

"How is that possible, sir? What is right yesterday, is right to-morrow—right for a thousand years—right for eternity."

"Yes, sir, in simple morals that would be quite true, but not in respect to the policy of nations. With these, right changes aspect according to political necessities, and the altered conditions of states. There is one truth, sir, which always eludes the class to which you belong."

"What is that, sir?"

"That the American colonies have passed through their minority. A people who are able to maintain themselves against foreign pressure, have survived the necessity of foreign rule. The mental and social developments which enable them to defend themselves by arms, are in proof of resources which revolt at foreign dominion. If the American mind is equal to its own necessities, it is adequate to its own rule. If we no longer need English armies for our protection, we no longer need English mind for our government."

"But this, sir, is the argument of ingratitude. You forget the past, sir—the immense debt, arms, men, money, all means and appliances, for strength and safety, which we owe to the mother-country."

"No, sir, it is Britain that forgets. We have forgotten noth-

ing. Britain had a right to expect our gratitude, but not the sacrifice of our liberties. That you should lend me money—nay, give it—protect me in weakness—help and cherish me in sickness—gives you no right to enslave me for ever for these services."

"Don't talk of slavery, sir, taxation is not slavery."

"The denial of our right, sir, is the worst slavery, and this was the error and offence of Britain. It proved her to be neither just nor wise. But do not let us glide into the renewal of old discussions. They can not serve us now. They can not change your habit, nor unsettle my principles. Let us talk of other things—of home, sir, of yourself, of the girls—of any subject but this which divides us."

The veteran sighed deeply.

"Willie Sinclair, my son, I sometimes feel that I could curse you, so bitterly do I suffer from the choice you have made against my sovereign."

"Do not that, my dear father—do not that!" answered the major tenderly, as he took the old man's hand, and carried it to his lips. The eyes of both were filled with tears. Carrie Sinclair stole round and passed her arm about the veteran's neck; little Lottie encircled that of her brother, intuitively, in the same manner. The father audibly sobbed as he replied:—

"But that I know you to be honest, Willie, I *could* have cursed you, and driven you for ever from my sight. But you have always been truthful, and spoken the truth; and I honor you, sir—honor you, though your course has sometimes saddened me;—and I rejoice in your valor and good name, Willie Sinclair, as a gentleman and a soldier, though your sword is raised for the defeat and dishonor of my sovereign."

After this there was silence for a space. When the dialogue was resumed, the subject was changed. For the present there were no more reproaches.

CHAPTER XVI.

DICK OF TOPHET'S LATER MOVEMENT.

"By the way, sir," said the major to his father, as the party sat at lunch, "you have been honored with a visit from Lord Rawdon and his suite."

"Yes, sir, I was so honored. His lordship took the Barony in his route upward, and passed the night with us, as did several of his suite. His army was cantoned in the old indigo-field."

"I was aware of it. Once or twice during the night, I was within a short half-mile of the house, and I made the circuit of his whole encampment."

"Indeed, sir, you were bold. The sight was hardly satisfactory. You saw some splendid troops, sir, fresh from Ireland; two thousand brave fellows at least, and some of the finest looking chaps I ever saw. And, by the way, sir, your sister Carrie there made a conquest of one of the young Irishmen."

"Ah, indeed! who?" and the major looked archly at his sister's face. "But why should I ask. I know already."

"How's that, sir?" and both the veteran and Carrie looked curious.

"We are well supplied with birds of the wood and air that bring us tidings in a moment from all quarters. The attentions of my Lord Edward Fitzgerald, to her sly ladyship, did not fail to be fully reported in camp."

"Why, Willie! he paid me no attention."

"Fie, Carrie, my child, you know he did. Ask Lottie, Willie; she can tell you all. The child was quite curious, I assure you; and was particularly mortified at being put to bed an hour or two before the usual time."

"Nay, father, not a minute."

"She certainly felt it a great hardship to be packed off and put away when she was."

"Yes, indeed, papa. And so many handsome officers."

"Tell Willie about the young lord, Lottie."

Carrie looked a little uneasy, and lifted her finger at the child, who smiled with a pretty little malice at her elder sister, and prattled out a mischievous reply.

"Oh! Lord Edward did talk a great deal with you, Carrie; you know he did; and he did watch you with all his eyes; and he sat with you a long time upon the sofa; and when papa was talking with the other lord, he got you to play for him upon the harpsichord; and Carrie sang for him, brother Willie, and he did seem so pleased to hear her sing; and it was a song about Ireland too; about 'the green isle of the ocean,' you know."

"A pretty case of *malice-malice*, and clearly all true, Carrie."

Carrie was no simple country-girl. She had seen a good deal of society, and exhibited no rustic emotions. Still, there was a heightened color upon her cheeks, as she laughingly answered—

"Every syllable, Willie; and that she remembers so well, and reports so truly, is only in proof that she was put to bed not a moment too soon. I shall have to indulge in more caution hereafter."

"You see, Willie, she is obliged to confess everything!" said the old man.

"*Is* it a full confession? I fancy from the color on her cheeks that something has been kept back. At all events, what is revealed is enough to make a lover jealous, and I must look up one of my friends and put him on the trail, Carrie."

The girl looked at her brother with an anxious warning in her eye, and continued to lift a finger to him, as she had done to Lottie. It was evidently a dangerous progress that the dialogue was taking toward a *tabooed* precinct, and the veteran turned suspiciously, and with a very decided change in his voice, said:—

"What is that, sir?—of whom are you speaking?"

"Nay, I am speaking of no one especially; but there is

enough in this story of Lord Edward to make another lover jealous."

"But there is no other, sir—none!"

"I am then really to understand, sir, that Lord Edward Fitzgerald is Carrie's lover?" answered the brother evasively.

"I said not that, sir—no, sir, I do not mean that. The young lord was certainly very attentive, and I was sorry to think that Carrie was not so well pleased with his attentions as she might have been. She played and sang for him, it is true, and behaved as graciously as any lady could do in her own house, sir."

"What more would you have, sir, unless you really desired her union with this young Irishman?"

"And I should not be displeased, sir, if such a thing could take place," retorted the veteran, quickly and rather sharply, as if somewhat dissatisfied with the tone of voice in which the major had spoken. He continued:—

"Lord Edward Fitzgerald, sir, is a young nobleman of the most noble character, and the most illustrious connections. My Lord Rawdon, who is charmed with his courage and conduct, gave me all his history. There is no stock in the Irish peerage superior. The Geraldines have always been famous for their blood. Lord Edward's father was the duke of Leinster; his mother the daughter of Charles, duke of Richmond; he himself, sir, is worthy of his race and immediate parents."

"You seem to have pursued the subject of Irish genealogy of late, sir, with more sympathy and respect than formerly. There was a time when Irish nobility, and the whole Irish race, found but little sympathy in your thoughts."

The veteran did not seem to relish the reminiscence.

"And for a good reason, sir—they were a rebellious people always."

"The ancestors of this young man especially so."

"The fault was in his ancestors—not in him, sir. He is making the proper atonement. But I can not expect that his present loyalty will find favor in your eyes, as it does in mine!"

"No, indeed, sir! How should it?" exclaimed the major of dragoons, rising from his chair and striding heavily across the apartment—"How should it, when it betrays all the examples

of his post, and all the securities of his country's future. How should he be here, sir, with his own people in bonds at home, fighting the battles of their oppressor! What a spectacle is it to see the nobles of a race, who perpetually complain of their own tyrants, seeking with naked swords to subject a foreign people to the sway of the same tyrannies. One who calls himself an Irish patriot fighting against the liberties of America."

"Liberties! Fiddlesticks!"

The young man did not notice the interruption as he continued:—

"It is thus that Ireland is made to drink the bitter cup of her own bondage—a bitterness to the lips, death to the life, dishonor to the soul. Her people serve as willing mercenaries of the very sovereign whom they hate, and every blow which they strike in his behalf, rivets more firmly the chain about their own wrists."

"Pshaw! This is all boy-declamation, Willie. Ireland wears no chains which it is not necessary and proper that she should wear."

The other quickly replied:—

"On that point, sir, we are agreed. And so long as her people are eager to fight the battles of their own tyrants, may the chains grow and eat into the flesh, and sink into the soul, and root out from existence every atom of life in the nature which so foolishly and foully degrades itself."

"Take care, sir—take care, Willie Sinclair! Do not make me angry, sir—I am not easily made angry, sir—I am quite quiet, quite gentle, my son—but d—n it, sir, beware how you provoke me!"

"I have no wish to provoke or anger you, sir, and we will dismiss the subject, if you please. I have no fear that Carrie Sinclair will feel more sympathy for this young Irish lord than I do. I trust that she will find a proper mate among her own people."

"Well, sir, but if she should—if, in obedience to my wishes, sir—"

"I have no fear, sir, that your wishes, in such an affair as this, will ever put on the aspect of a law, sir."

"And why not, sir—why not!"

"Because, sir, I know that you can never become a tyrant to your own children."

"I know not that, sir. when they become disobedient, rebellious, Willie Sinclair. And this reminds me to ask, sir, since when did you become an intimate of a certain Captain Travis, of Edisto?"

"Now comes my turn!" was the unuttered thought of the major of dragoons, looking with a faint smile to the anxious face of Carrie.

"I am no intimate of Captain Travis, sir."

"Ah! I am very glad to hear it, sir. He is not the person, sir, whom I should wish to see intimate with a son of mine. He is a dirty fellow, sir—not a gentleman—a corrupt, selfish, mercenary rascal. I knew him well in the Cherokee war. He is not the person for a gentleman's intercourse. But you have intercourse with him, sir—pray what is the nature of that intercourse?"

"It belongs wholly to my official duties. It is, accordingly, sir, of a nature not to be communicated."

"How, Willie Sinclair—how can that be? This man is in the service, I am sorry to say it, of his Britannic majesty. He is in the commissariat, I believe. I sold him a hundred head of cattle on British account."

"You are right, sir; he is in the commissariat."

"Of what nature, then, is your intercourse with him if it be official. Either he is a traitor to his king, sir—"

"Do you not see, my dear father, from your own conclusions, that the intercourse with him is such as it would not be proper for me to tell, or you to hear?"

The old man paused a moment, then resumed:—

"And, on your honor, sir, you have none but an official intercourse with him."

"None, sir."

"How, then, is it that this person has the audacity to come to me, and impudently to suggest a union between his family and mine?"

"He must answer this question for himself. I can only say that his proposition was wholly unauthorized by me."

"I am glad to hear you say thus much, Willie—very glad.

But have you told me all, sir? Is there no secret in reserve? I tell you, Willie Sinclair, that this man Travis did more than hint to me that you had a passion for his daughter."

"He told you but the truth, sir—though unauthorized to do so."

"And why unauthorized? Who has a better right than a father to be made aware of the disposition of a son?"

"And in proper season, sir, all the secrets of Willie Sinclair shall be put into his father's keeping. Let this suffice for the present. If my confidences are in anything withheld from you, sir, or any of my family, it is only where they affect others. When they relate to myself only, you shall know them all. When I am permitted to speak for others, you shall hear."

"This will not answer, sir. Who is this young woman, sir—the daughter of this miserable commissary?—"

"Let me pray you, my dear father, to say nothing of *her*, and, for the present, if you please, no more of him. In due time, you shall know all that I can tell. Enough now that, in a season while the storm rages without, we are a family of love within. Will you not spare to our meeting, destined to be cut short in a few hours"—and the major took out his watch, and mused over the face of it for a moment—"let us, my dear father, enjoy the two or three hours that are left to our reunion, without another word calculated to impair its serenity."

The old man put his hand to his brow. There was some sullenness upon his face as he replied:—

"Be it so, Willie Sinclair. The rights of my sovereign do not forbid that I should tolerate the presence for a few hours of my son—and I trust that his own training has been such as will keep him from a degrading alliance. One thing let me say and bear it in mind, if you please, never, while my head is hot, will I tolerate the presence of that man, Travis, in my house as one who has a right to be there. Never! never."

And the fist of the veteran thundered upon the table, as if to register the oath. The young man's face saddened for a moment, but he shook away the cloud, and seizing his father's hand, he cried laughingly:—

"I doubt, my dear father, that the reception which you gave him when he was last here, will ever encourage him to a second

venture. Be sure, father, that he shall never intrude under my auspices. But sir——"

He paused. He felt the necessity of prudence.

"Well—but what?" said the veteran.

"Nothing *now*, sir;—but, is it not near the dinner hour? I confess to an amazing appetite."

The veteran smiled grimly.

"You shall have some dinner. Meanwhile, sir, not to provoke your appetite to a too intense degree, you shall join me in some wine-bitters."

And the stomachic was resorted to, and the parties smacked their lips after it.

"To a dragoon, sir, in our service," said the young officer, "food and drink become primary principles. Our supplies are served so capriciously, that it is a rule with the dragoon to eat and drink whenever opportunity offers. If he dines with you this hour, and another dinner offers the next, he welcomes it without any consciousness of the feast that he has just finished. And thus, eating inordinately one day, he will go without food for three, yet suffer little inconvenience."

"That is the case with the Indians. I have known a Cherokee runner go eight days, on a trot ten hours per day, eating nothing but a handful of browned maize, some three times a day, and without seeming to feel hunger, or the want of meat; yet put the meat before him and he will devour you ten pounds at a sitting."

"Ten pounds, father?" exclaimed Carrie.

"On my life, true! You must not look upon the red-skin as a monster, Carrie. The white will do the same thing under similar circumstances, nay, eat his grandmother, and never heed for his dishes the dressing of a Parisian cook. Nature is full of such seeming anomalies; and you are to estimate the performance by a regard to the previous endurance. Irregularity of food produces a spasmodic vigor of the stomach, which makes it capable of astonishing performances.

"But just in the same degree does the capacity for drink lessen under the same circumstances. Your starving man can not drink much safely, or without danger to the brain. He grows terribly wolfish and savage from drink when famished, and is

something of a madman. By the way, Willie, I do not find that old Madeira does me any hurt with the gout"—filling his glass as he spoke with the amber-hued beverage. The young man followed his example.

"Our physicians, sir, you are aware, recommend the *old* Madeira as beneficial in gout, and though the opinion is somewhat questioned, I do not see with what reason. You drink a drug as medicine, in gout, which is dissolved in the strongest alcohol. The drug itself passes into the circulation, and must affect the brain, and when you affect the brain, you necessarily affect the general health always. Now, what worse can old Madeira do? — unless, sir — and there lies the true difficulty — you drink more than the proper dose; — a danger which is always present when the medicine is so very palatable."

"I, faith, you're right. I suspect that is the true distinction. There"—pushing away the bottle — "I will take no more today. You must finish it for yourself, Willie."

"As an old proverb hath it, father — 'A short horse is soon curried!' and he pointed to the greatly-diminished measure in the decanter."

"Oh! do not apprehend that your allowance shall be short. There is a good supply above stairs, though my Lord Rawdon, and the young Irishman did play a famous stick among the bottles. They left half a dozen dead men, floored as completely as if the shilelah had been at work. Ah! Willie, I should like you to know Fitzgerald."

"Not, I trust, while his sword is at the bosom of my country But enough of that. Ha! here is Congaree Polly."

And the great staring negro woman made her appearance with waiters, knives, forks, &c., all significant of preparations for the approaching dinner.

"By the way, Polly, what do you say to Little Peter for a husband?"

"Ki! Mass Willie, wha' I hab for say? Wha' Little Peter wants wid me?"

"Come! come! Polly, no highflying airs with me. Will you have Little Peter, or shall I send him over to milkwoman Lenah?"

"He kin tek [take] Lenah ef he want 'em."

"Then I must tell him you won't have him."

"Wha' for, Mass Willie, you bodder you' se'f wid nigger defections? Le' de niggar look out he own wife. I spec' Little Peter kin ten' to he own consarns."

"Well, as you please," said the major laughing — "you are all hypocrites together. But hark ye, Polly, have you looked in upon our prisoner down stairs. How does he get on?"

"He call me, leettle bit ago, when I bin guine t'rough de passage, and beg me gee 'em some water."

"Well, you gave him?"

"Yes, he drink de whole calabash. Den he shibber all ober, and say he berry cole, and beg me put leetle bit o' fire in de chimbley."

"But you did not, woman?"

"Oh! yes! De man so cole, Mass Willie, and shibber so all ober;" and the wench suited the action to the word in very wintry fashion.

"Fire in midsummer! Fool! fool!" exclaimed the major of dragoons; and, whirling the astounded negro out of his way, he dashed down into the basement with the utmost speed of blood and limbs.

The instincts and the experience of the partisan soldier, were not easily mistaken. His sudden apprehensions were all realised. Dick of Tophet was nowhere to be seen, but the fragments of the ropes which had bound him lay about, half consumed by the fire; and the blazing torches cast upon the floor of the apartment, were beginning to blaze and crackle very merrily. Had the room been furnished with any inflammable material, the discovery made by the major would not have been in season to save the dwelling.

With one so prompt, cool, and energetic as our major of dragoons, it required but a few moments to extinguish the fire. Having done this, and in a close and hurried search about the premises, seen that the outlaw was really gone, and was nowhere lurking in the immediate precincts, Willie Sinclair hurried up stairs.

"One is never safe," said he, "let him be never so sure, particularly when there are women near him, no matter what the color. Their sympathies are so many weapons in the hands of the cunning. This rascal is off."

"Off!—and out of Benny's hitch!" said the old man.

"Ay! and it is difficult to say what hitch, short of that which suspends him to a hickory, would make such a scoundrel sure. I was a fool to trust him out of my own sight, or to suffer any to approach him. But, it is a lesson that I will not forget. Get to the housetop, Carrie, and look out. We must prepare for every sort of danger!—a siege—perhaps a storm!"

CHAPTER XVII.

NEW CAUSES OF APPREHENSION.

The operations of Dick of Tophet, however mysterious the proceeding might appear to those who know nothing of the resource and hardihood which were acquirable in such a civil war as that which raged in the Carolinas and Georgia during the last three years of the Revolution, were yet exceedingly simple. One would think that, tied hand and foot, his arms laced together behind his back, it would be impossible for the outlaw to make his escape without succor from another party. But the fire once accorded him by the slave, the rest was easy. Dick could easily simulate the sufferings of one seized with "the shaking agy." His "shibbering" imposed upon the sympathies and unquestioning simplicity of Congaree Polly; and a negro, even in midsummer, never needs an argument to establish the advantages of a blazing fire. Polly never hesitated to light the brands for Dick just as he required. He had no other service to seek at her hands; and, the moment she disappeared, the hardy raffian thrust his feet over the blazing lightwood, and endured the scorching flame without shudder or retreat, until the cords snapped in twain which bound his legs together. He was greatly scorched and burnt, but he was tough, and however deficient in other virtues, he had that of endurance in perfection. He was now able to stand upon his feet, and to walk. Could he escape? Was he watched? Where were his guards? To answer these questions satisfactorily required some little time, and he proceeded to look into his situation with the greatest precaution. He occupied one of four rooms in a brick basement. These rooms were appropriated to inferior purposes. One was a lumber-room, the door of which was locked. This was opposite his own. Another was a "wash-room," and he

could hear the *blanchisseuse* at her operations within. The door was open. A common passage led to all, and by a stair-flight to the upper apartments. To these he had no desire to ascend, now that he was weaponless, and knew what sort of customer he should probably have to encounter in his attempt. It was quite clear that he was able to escape from the dwelling, but was it equally certain that he should succeed, unseen, in crossing the court, and getting into the cover of the woods? At all events these offered him the only chance of refuge. The effort must be made. Any peril which might follow him in flight was preferable to the certain doom which awaited him in his present bonds. He knew Willie Sinclair well. He knew what he had to expect in the camp of Marion to which he concluded himself to be destined. There was not a moment's hesitation in his adoption of the resolve to fly.

But in what manner was the question? He had made his observations, stealing from door to door of the several apartments of the basement, listening at each, peeping into them through crack and keyhole, and, out of the house, through door and window. The employment, by Sinclair, of most of the house-servants along the edge of the wood below—a fact which our outlaw now readily conceived—afforded him comparative freedom from detection while making his *reconnoissance*. The kitchen was some thirty yards from the house. Half-a-dozen little negroes were playing in front of it. Congaree Polly could be seen occasionally going to and fro. It required but five minutes to pass from the dwelling to a little copse on the right which gradually stretched away till it mingled with the trees of the avenue along the public road. This was the route which the outlaw proposed to take, as likely to afford the best shelter, and as, most probably, left unwatched by the scouting negroes.

But should he be encountered—his arms bound—no weapon in his grasp? The meanest negro of the plantation could, in such case—and he well knew, would—despatch him with a billet. The fierce outlaw shuddered at the thought of his defencelessness in such a danger. To die fighting was scarcely a subject of his fears at any time; but to be incapable of a blow; to see it descending, and from a negro's hand, and offer no resistance;—this was a fear which the ruffian could not contem-

plate without a shudder. If free to fly, he must be free to fight! He must be able to lift his hands unmanacled, and to grasp a weapon in them.

It is surprising how soon one finds means and resources where the will and courage are not wanting. How thought meets necessity, and ingenuity extricates strength from shackles. Will and courage are the true gods of circumstance, and supply the tools as well as the opportunity. Now, base, bloody, brutal as he was, Dick of Tophet had these qualities in large degree. With one or more other virtues he might have been a great man. Had his education trained his sensibilities and tastes, equally with his nerves and muscles, he might have substituted the name of hero for that of outlaw. As it was, he was capable of great things in the latter character. He conceived the process by which to release his arms from the rope; he had but to exercise the same firmness in the process that he had shown while his ankles had been held above the flame of the blazing light-wood and he could be free! The performance was a more tedious as well as trying one, but if his endurance held, it was as certain in its results.

Conceive now the awkwardness of this proceeding, as we watch his operations. His arms are fast tethered together behind his back, the wrists secured by the ropes with a space of a few inches between them. It was as Benny Bowlegs boasted, "a powerful hitch"—such as it would have been impossible for any physical strength to rend asunder. The knot was crossed just beneath the small of the outlaw's back. He calculated all his difficulties nicely; then, with his feet, drew one of the blazing brands from the fireplace out upon the hearth. This done he deliberately let himself down upon the floor, in a half-sitting, half-lying posture, with the cord directly over the blaze. In this position he could see nothing of the operation—only *feel!* His clothes took fire. He rolled himself over upon the floor and thus extinguished it; rolled himself back over the flame and was again in a blaze! He had recourse to the same expedient as before, of rolling upon his back, until the flame was subdued. Thrice did he require to save himself in this manner, and terrible was the suffering which he endured. His back was in a blister—his neck—his very hair was seized by the flame!

But such was his coolness and resolution that he persevered until the cords snapped apart that bound him, and his arms were free; then he leaped to his feet, and in the joy which he felt, in spite of all his pain, he could scarce forbear whooping aloud his triumph. Let the prisoner, in a similar "hitch" take note of the process by which it may be undone, and if he has the courage to endure, he has in his own hands the means of his escape.

The mind's conscious triumph almost subdues the body's sufferings. Our Dick of Tophet suffered truly, but not so much at this moment, as he was destined to suffer a few hours later. His anxiety helped somewhat to subdue the intensity of his pains. He had trembled while his experiment was in progress, not because of the pain, but lest he should be interrupted. But our major of dragoons was too busy with the family above stairs — the outlaw could hear the subdued tones of their voices, while he stole through the passage; — and Congaree Polly was engaged in the solemn duty of spreading the table for dinner. She had passed up-stairs and down, and from the house to the kitchen, twice, while the prisoner was undergoing his self-imposed infliction of fire. He had heard her progress, and then it was that his heart swelled, and his frame trembled with apprehension. It was over! His limbs were free, and he must be prompt if he would escape. He had no time to think of burnt clothes, shrivelled hair, and blistered back and arms. His sleeves were burnt, his arms scorched and blackened from wrist to elbow; — but he was free. His hands were free — his feet! He allowed them no delay. He gave himself a moment only to draw the brands from the hearth and lay them down together on the floor. He cursed the bare chamber in which he had been lodged that it contained no fuel, no furniture, no bed-clothes, no stuffs of any kind which could be made to contribute to the rapid spread of the fire. Should the house suddenly break out into flame, his chances of escape would be increased; and then what a fine turn of vengeance would he have done the class of "harrystocrats" that he so much hated!

He did what he could, in the brief moment allowed him to effect his vindictive and destructive object. He piled the blazing *lightwood* upon the floor, and left it to do its pleasure, even as Willie Sinclair found it.

The latter fortunately came in season to stifle the flame which had already communicated to the floor. It required but a few moments to draw the brands apart, and cast water upon the burning fragments.

"Fool that I was!" he muttered, as he was thus employed, "to suffer a negro — and a woman too — to approach the scoundrel!" and thus muttering and feeling, he made his way upstairs and sounded his bugle thrice to summon to the house his two scouting negro-fellows, and such others as they might have gathered about them.

"But where is the dog — where is Tiger all this time? I had thought to ask after him before. Had he been about the dwelling this villain never would have ventured nigh. At all events we should have had warning of every one of the rascal's movements."

"Little Peter been tek' Tiger wid 'em to de wood," answered Congaree Polly.

"Ah! that accounts for it! I can not blame him, for Tiger would be quite as serviceable on the scout as here. But we must now have them all back, Benny, Peter, Tiger — all that we can gather together. We must contract our forces if we would make them answer any good purpose. To encounter these rascals properly, we must draw them out of the wood We are quite a match for them, I think, if they venture to attack the house."

And Willie Sinclair again sounded the bugle for the return of the negroes.

"What a determined rascal!" exclaimed the veteran, meditating the outlaw's escape. "Who could have thought it? And how the scoundrel must have suffered! What hardihood and endurance. By Jove, sir, if that fellow could have been caught young, and trained properly, he would have become famous."

"Yes, indeed! We know him of old. He is capable of the most desperate things. Let me tell you, sir, his scorchings must have been a few degrees severer than your twinges of gout!"

"And then the resource!"

"Yes, it reminds me of an affair that took place at the capture of Orangeburg, when Fisher held the garrison by Sumter. Among the prisoners were two notorious outlaws, Cooper and Pen-

darvis. They were intrusted to the care of two whigs, Travis and Duesto; Travis, by the way, being a cousin of the Captain Travis, of Edisto, of whom we have spoken. No doubt that the persons would have been tried and hung when they had reached Belleville; but the two men having charge of them, were impatient of any such tedious process of getting rid of them. They were personal enemies of the prisoners, and the latter gave them some trouble along the road, requiring, every now and then, to be pricked forward with the bayonet. They were both handcuffed together, the left arm of Cooper being riveted to the right of Pendarvis. As the evening approached, Travis proposed to Duesto, to shoot the prisoners, and thus relieve themselves from the trouble in respect to them. The measure was agreed on, and both fired at the same moment. The two handcuffed men fell together, Pendarvis sprawling completely over the body of Cooper. The former was slain outright, the latter only wounded slightly. But he pretended to be dead and lay quiet. The murderers ascertained that Pendarvis was dead, and they presumed that Cooper was also. But to make sure, Travis run his bayonet through Cooper's neck, the wounded man feeling and hearing the steel as it grated in the sand below him. Yet he was cool and hardy enough still to remain quiet. and so they were left on the roadside, not a mile from the village. When they were gone, Cooper recovered, and threw off the body of Pendarvis. But, handcuffed to the dead man, with the use of his own right only, how was he to extricate himself? The hitch seems to have been more sure than that of our Dick of Tophet. But he had similar resources. He dragged the body of Pendarvis, who was a very large and portly person, to the woods, there he found a couple of lightwood knots; he laid the fettered hand of the dead man upon one of these knots, and with the other he beat it to a jelly, then withdrew it from the shackle; and, wounded in the body, with a bayonet thrust through the neck, feeble from loss of blood, the stubborn scoundrel made off, carrying with him the handcuffs, till he got down to Fletcher's blacksmith shop, where he had the fetters stricken off, and made his way finally in safety to his home in the Forks of Edisto. He is living yet, and, I am sorry to say, is as great a rogue and tory as ever."

"The fellow was a hero, sir—and I rejoice that such hardy courage is engaged on the right side."

"The right side with him, and most of the same kidney, is that which promises most plunder. In less than three months, he will probably find his way to Marion's camp, imploring to be received to mercy, and professing the greatest penitence for his evil deeds. Courage and endurance are no doubt admirable virtues in a soldier, but they are such as we are just as apt to find in the bosom of a sturdy ruffian. All of these rascals with whom we are now threatened are in the service of his Britannic majesty."

"D—n 'em! I don't care in whose service they profess to be, if I can only get a shot at them. But, for this infernal gout, Willie, I should answer confidently against a score of the scamps; but wheel me up to yonder window, and let me have my pistols. By the Lord Harry, but I long to have a crack or two at a scoundrel before I cease to kick. I feel that a little excitement in my head will lessen the infernal twitchings in my foot. Oh! for ten years that I have lost—I may say in doing nothing."

"I would to Heaven, sir, that you had twenty back, and were fighting on the right side."

"Oh! d—n the side!" cried the old man, now thoroughly roused and excited. "Devil take the side when a fight's going for'a'd! That's not the time to discuss the rights of the question. Wheel me to the window I say, Willie, and let me have a hand in the game. The pistols, Carrie, the old dogs! I will refresh their memories with a good feed."

"Here they are, papa," cried Lottie, running up. "Here they are! Shall I load 'em for you, papa?"

"Load 'em for me! Hear that, Willie! What think you of my putting Lottie in small-clothes, and making her my henchman? Ha! ha! And who taught you to load pistols, hussy?"

"Oh! I can load them, papa: I've seen brother Willie load 'em often, and I watched him. First you put in the powder you know—there's the little charger—then the wadding, and then the bullet—and you wad that too, papa."

"By the Lord Harry she does seem to know all about it! Well, you shall load one of them, Lottie, while I load the other.

Now, let us see how you put your education to use. Right! That is the measure."

And, really, the little creature showed that she had watched the process closely; she proceeded to her task with equal promptness and propriety.

"That will do for ramming the powder down, Lottie. There's a rule in rhyme for ramming, Lottie, which you will remember:—

"'Ram powder light,
But bullet tight!'

Good! I see you know all about it, my girl. You shall be a soldier's wife, Lottie."

"Yes, papa: I shall be Lord Edward's, papa; he's such a nice, handsome, brave cavalier!"

"What! so ambitious, little Lottie! But that can't be. Lord Edward is for Carrie, and you must not think to rival your sister, Lottie."

"Oh! she shall have all my rights, papa," cried Carrie, with a slight suffusion of the cheek, as she was employed parading swords and pistols for her brother; "I relinquish in Lottie's favor."

"Yes, papa, sis don't want Lord Edward. She's for another sort of cavalier. Don't you remember the song she made:—

"'There was a gallant cavalier.'"

"Hush, Lottie, hush, child!" said Carrie, unnecessarily flushed in the face.

"Let her speak, Carrie," said the old man. "She is evidently far advanced in a damsel's peculiar education. She is preparing herself to be a soldier's bride."

"It must be Lord Edward, papa."

"Well, if you will be your sister's rival, it is at your own peril. but where's Willie gone?"

The major of dragoons had left the house, and the veteran now for the first time heard the distant baying of bloodhounds in the woods below, significant of a hunt in progress. It was these sounds which had called him off from the party; and, whispering to Carrie to keep a sharp look-out from the upper story, he stole out, well armed, to join the negroes, who had thus far failed to answer the requisitions of his bugle.

He found Benny on the alert—Peter was scouting with the dog Tiger.

"He must come in," said the major. "These fellows will capture him."

"Nebber fear for Little Peter, Mass Willie; dem blackguard nebber guine catch 'em."

"But we want him here, Benny. We shall need him and many others, I fear. That rascal Hell-fire Dick has got off."

"Git off! Hell-fire Dick git off! How he git off, out o' dat hitch I put on 'em?" demanded the negro in consternation.

Briefly, the major told the story of the good services of Con garee Polly.

"Dat gal will be de deat' of me yit!" cried Benny Bowlegs. "And wha for done now?"

"Fall back and protect the house. We may look for an attack from these scoundrels. It is evident that Dick has not yet joined them, or he would stop their trailing. He now knows where I am. He knows that I have no support."

"Wha'! and whay's Benny Bowlegs? Enty he's yer!" And he dropped the butt of the shot-gun of his master, with which he had armed himself, heavily upon the ground, with the air of an old soldier who knew his strength. "And whay's Little Peter? Little Peter guine fight like de debbil, Willie Sinclair, when de scratch come!"

"I hope so, Benny; so we'll have Little Peter in as soon as possible." And he prepared to sound for him.

"Le' me gee 'um a call, Mass Willie; Little Peter comprehen's my music better dan your'n."

And the fellow blew three peculiar *notes* on his hunting-horn—an instrument with which all southern negroes are pretty familiar, and which the cowdriver and the hog-minder employ as much as the deer-hunter. Soon they heard Peter's response; and before many minutes the fellow made his appearance, followed by Tiger. The dog was lively, keen, wistful, and impatient—eager, apparently, to retrace his steps to the woods, where still, at moments, the deep, distant baying of his own species was to be heard.

"See how he bristle up!" said Little Peter, pointing to the dog.

"I sooner hab Tige dat half ob dem frot-dodgers!" quoth Benny, rubbing down the dog's bristles.

The major did not seem to heed what was said. He mused a while, then remarked:—

"We have men enough for our weapons, Benny, if not enough for these outlaws."

"Hab 'nough for dem too, massa."

"I hope so. I trust we shall have more in another hour. Meantime, it might be well to gather up a dozen of the field *hands*. They will fight at a pinch."

"Some o' dem, massa. But it must be a *hard* pinch, I tell you. Let me stand behind Bullhead Dabe, Slick Sam, and Snubnose Martin, an' I mek' 'em fight. Ef you say so, I kin sen' off, and bring up tree, seben, fibe ob de boys."

"Do so; send Peter at once. Where's the indigo-field, this year?"

"Jest a mile off, back ob de settlement."

"It's 'most time for first cutting, Benny."

"Two week off, at fardest, massa. Ha! you ain't forgit how to mek' a crop!"

"The hands are not there?"

"No, sah! dey're working in de corn jest now; and dat's only tree quarters ob a mile. Set off, you, Little Peter, and bring up Bullhead Dabe, and Slick Sam, and Snubnose Martin; and don't you say nothing 'bout de sawt ob work we hab for 'em; and don't you stop for talk wid any ob dem woman. Woman is always sure for spile de sport ob sodger gemplemans. As for you' gal, Congaree Polly, 'member I owe 'em a licking, and ef you no 'habe [behave] yourself decent an' orderly, I hab for gee um. Wha' you tink, tis *him* let dat d—d polecat, Debbil Dick, out ob de hitch I mek."

"You no tell me so, Uncle Benny! I lick 'em meself!" exclaimed Little Peter indignantly. "Wha' he hab for do wid Debbil Dick?" and he looked fiercely inquisitive; and, as he said afterward, he felt "sassy like a wild-cat."

"Nebber min' dat!" quoth Benny. "Be off on you trottera. Lef de dog. We's maybe want 'em yer."

Par parenthese, we may mention, that a nickname, derived from an event or a characteristic, sticks wonderfully to a plan-

tation-negro. Bullhead Daby, and Slick Sam, had their epithets from characteristic qualities; Snubnose Martin was distinguished by the most contemptible of his features, one of the meanest and "onnaterallest leetle bits of noses," according to Benny, that ever dared to stand out from a broad lake of face; a sort of petty islet in the sea of Acheron. Gongaree Polly was so named in contradistinction to Wassamassaw Polly—another woman on the same plantation. The prefixes, in both cases, were derived from their places of birth. We may add that it was no uncommon thing to find the whites similarly discriminated by the common people. There were the Savannah river and the Edisto Huttos for example; the Santee and Ashepoo and Edisto Baltazegars, &c.; and, in all these and many other instances, the families were found on opposite sides in the war.

Little Peter was off in a moment to bring up his recruits. Meanwhile, the sounds of the hunt from below seemed to approach. The baying of the beagles could be heard distinctly, and the cries of the hunters cheering them on, were now distinguished.

"We must put ourselves under cover, and in readiness. We may have to stand a siege, Benny."

"God be praise, Mass Willie, we kin all fight like de debbil." Benny, you will perceive, was piously inclined.

"If we can keep them off, for a single hour, Benny, we shall ask no odds."

"Wha' you speck in dat single hour, massa?"

"Payne St. Julien, with a company of my battalion, Benny."

"Ha! I lub to hear 'bout battalion. Battalions is better dan rigiments."

"Rather! I wish these scoundrels to besiege us, Benny, and would have them come on with confidence."

"Da's right; for ef Cappin St. Julien is a-coming, den we hab de blackguards in a trap."

"Exactly! There were only four of them last night, but there may be more this morning. I suspect they have been joined by others of the gang."

"De more de better! Den de buzzard will hab better chance at picking, and mouthe, won't nose up so many of my sheep."

Benny, like most *drivers* on a plantation, usually spoke of it, with all its chattels, as his own. So, discussing the prospects before them, the two took their way to the house, the dog following them, but with some reluctance.

Here, Willie Sinclair made all his dispositions for defence Benny brought into requisition certain little negroes, who were set to watch from housetop, tree, and kitchen. Congaree Polly, rather in disgrace, and terribly humbled, was sent up to the roof, and her head, looking pilloried and very black in the face, was thrust through the scuttle; and, with watches set, and weapons loaded, Willie Sinclair bade the cook bring in the dinner as she could—his father showing himself quite impatient at the prospect of having his roast lamb and boiled mutton, upon which he prided himself, overdone. The orders of his son propitiated him.

"A cook that does her dishes to rags, Willie," quoth he, "is an emissary of the devil."

"An opinion," replied the other, "for which my friend Captain Porgy would embrace you, sir, across the table."

"Porgy—Captain Porgy, sir? Is it possible, Willie Sinclair, that your miserable service requires you to associate with persons having such detestable names? Why, sir, among gentlemen, even the fish of that name is only held fit for negroes."

"Sir, I believe, with Shakspere, that 'a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.'"

"And I don't believe in any such doctrine. Names are not only things, sir, but they are significant of virtues. Call a rose a radish and it bites the tongue. And that any respectable service should accord a commission to a man named Porgy is absolutely monstrous."

"Wait, sir, till you know my friend Porgy."

"God forbid, sir, that I ever should."

"When you do, sir—as I am now sworn that you shall know him—I will wager a wagon-load of continental money against a Jacobus, that you offer him not only a perpetual seat at your table, but the entire management of your cook. Captain Porgy, sir, is the only wit and buffoon, sir, that I ever met, or heard of, who never suffered you once to forget that he was all the while a gentleman."

And the party sat down to dinner.

"Now," said the *veteran*, "if these rascals will only hold off till we have swallowed dinner, I shall be in better mood for the conflict."

"Thought like an Englishman!" said the major of dragoons.

"And how should I think but as an Englishman, and where do you think the American or any other race, would think differently? Your rascally French allies are not to be quoted at all in such matters."

"And yet they are held to be perfect masters in such matters."

"Ay, sir, as cooks, to dress and prepare the food, sir, but not to eat it. Give them what credit you please, *as cooks*, but the grace, taste, and general ability, with which an Englishman eats, is unequalled, sir, by any people."

"The subject is one of endless ramifications, sir, and would require for its discussion more practical experience than I have yet had in such matters; but we may safely assume, I think, that a people who know so well how to prepare the dishes, is hardly wanting in the ability to do them proper justice."

"Well, sir, is that mutton to your liking?"

"Exactly, sir; and you see I am proving my ability after our poor American fashion. In respect, however, to the effect which a good dinner, not stinted, has upon the fighting man, you should hear my friend Porgy. He says, that an American should never be forced into battle with a full stomach. He admits the British to be differently constituted, but thinks that, even with them, the appetite should never be fully pacified before fighting. With all classes, he is of opinion that the better course is to put the dinner before them—a good one—as good and tempting as possible—let them see it, till their eyes become fascinated—nay, let them taste it, but only taste—and then, let the drums beat and the bugles sound to quarters. Soldiers, thus tantalized, he asserts to be the most dangerous customers in the world—absolutely wolfish—who will then tear and rend their foes, having no fear; each man having, as it were, a personal feeling of revenge to gratify, as if robbed by his enemy of the choicest blessing of his life."

"He's no fool, that fish! There's sense in the notion."

"They tell a good story," continued the major, "of the mode which he employed to convert a timid fellow into a desperado. Just before the beginning of our Revolution—"

"Rebellion, sir."

"Well, sir, rebellion be it! I care very little *now*, for the distinction."

The father growled, and pushed the Madeira toward the son.

"Drink, sir, and imbibe more sensible notions at once of names and things."

"Long life and a good appetite for all good things, sir, to the end of the chapter! Carrie, my dear, wet your lips with us—"

"Well, sir, to your story."

"Porgy, sir, who, before the war, was a rice-planter on the Ashepoo, a *bon vivant*, and fast liver, though a great reader, and philosophical humorist, was employed by one of the Fenwickes to answer for him as a friend, in an interview with a gentleman who bore the challenge of one Major Pritchard. Porgy would have declined, as Fenwicke was supposed to be constitutionally timid; but the young fellow appealed to him with a good deal of pathos. He was, in fact, almost friendless on the occasion; had quarrelled with his family and associates, and was rather in Coventry, in consequence of some gaming transactions. Porgy's good nature made him yield; but he felt the awkwardness of going out with a person who might show the white feather. How was he to prevent such a discreditable exhibition? As I have said, Porgy is something of a philosopher, and entertains peculiar notions of the effect of food, and the various sorts of it, upon the moral as well as physical nature. Red pepper, for example, he avers to be an article, which, taken in quantity, will irritate the temper, but lessen the nerve. He has similar opinions of other condiments, spices, and even drinks, in lessening the courage. Whiskey, he holds to be decidedly hurtful to valor;—"

"Gad, there's something reasonable in the fellow's philosophy. I have that notion myself."

"He says that when our militia-men run—"

"As they are monstrous apt to do!"

"It is due to the fact that they drink whiskey, and not Jamai

ca, which he values much more as a good moral stimulus. But, like you, sir, he has a better faith in Madeira, than in any other known beverage."

"I fancy I shall like that fellow, Porgy."

"You will, sir; but to my story. The arrangements made for the affair between Fenwicke and Pritchard, the time fixed, and all adjusted, Porgy took his principal home to his house the morning before the affair was to take place. This, he did, under the pretext of avoiding the sheriff's officers. He kept him locked up in an upper chamber, and left him to himself for twelve hours, on a slender supply of biscuit and Madeira. Before noon the supply was exhausted, and the housekeeper had no keys, and but three cold-boiled Irish potatoes—which Porgy esteems fine food for soldiers—were to be found in an open cupboard. These Fenwicke devoured without salt or butter. At midnight Porgy made his appearance and made a thousand apologies. Fenwicke was compelled to look satisfied; but when he asked for supper, there was no satisfactory answer. Porgy pleaded some singular disappointments in his supplies. But he got out fresh biscuit and over a bottle of Madeira, he succeeded in putting Fenwicke into tolerable humor. They retired and both slept late; but descended finally to an admirable breakfast in which everything that could excite appetite was displayed. Fenwicke's eyes glistened. He rubbed his hands. He was as hungry, by this time, as a dragoon's horse on a long scout. He sat down, but was allowed to swallow only two or three mouthfuls, when Porgy pulled out his watch and started up in alarm. 'Good Heavens, Mr. Fenwicke,' said he, 'we shall be too late unless we go at a gallop. It is within forty minutes of the time, and we have three miles to get to the place of meeting.' Fenwicke looked at him like a hyena. 'Heavens, sir, I am famished!' 'Never mind,' quoth Porgy, 'we shall only have a better appetite after the affair is over. Everything shall be kept warm. See to it, Tom—on your life, see to it!' he cried to his cook—a famous fellow, by the way, sir, the best cook in the army—and thus speaking, he hurried Fenwicke off to the horses which had previously been got in readiness. They had scarcely mounted when Porgy called for a bottle of porter which he divided between himself and his

companion. 'This will stay your stomach, sir,' he said, and this was all he allowed him, except a single biscuit, which Fenwicke snatched up from the table."

"But why the porter, sir?"

"To produce a more morbid condition of the stomach. To divert the impression as much as possible from the brain. Such was his theory at least. His philosophy is a curious one, and he insists greatly upon the important uses of porter in the case of nervous men, with an active imagination."

"Well, sir, what was the result?"

"Why, that Fenwicke was sufficiently angry, on the gallop, to quarrel with his second, goaded, it may be, by the provocative sort of conversation in which Porgy indulged by the way. He reached the ground in this humor, was impatient of all control, impatient for the fight—came up to the ring in handsome style, rushed desperately in upon his antagonist, got a flesh wound on breast and arm, but succeeded in running Pritchard through the body."

Carrie Sinclair shuddered as she said:—

"But he did not kill him, Willie?"

"On the spot! Yet, the moment the deed was done, he nearly fainted, and could scarcely mount his horse. He staggered off like one mortally hurt himself."

"The fellow was no coward," said the old man, "only tenderhearted."

"Porgy asserts that no man is absolutely a coward or absolutely brave; that all depends on training; that we are all, more or less, the creatures of circumstance; and that, in particular conditions of mind, or body, or situation, we are audacious or timid;—that every man, the most brave, has moments of fear,* and that the most timid, under particular training, or accidental influences, will show the most audacious valor; that the stomach has more to do with it than the brain or heart; and that the greatest secret in the training of the soldier, is proper food, of the proper kind, at the proper time, and properly cooked. He professes to believe that his cook Tom has done more toward teaching his men how to fight, than all the training of all the officers."

* This was subsequently the opinion of Napoleon and Wellington

"I shall like that fellow Porgy, I fancy. You may bring him here, Willie, should a chance offer, as soon as your insurrection is over. But I do not believe in all Mr. Porgy's doctrines. For my part, I may safely say that I never knew the sentiment of fear in my life."

The major laughed—then suddenly exclaimed, as if in consternation:—

"Take care, Lottie, you are about to tread on papa's foot!"

The old man screamed—throwing up both hands:—

"For God's sake, my child!"

The child had never moved—was sitting quietly at the table—not near the gouty member! Such was the power of the imagination, that the old man had never exercised a single sense, before he screamed. The major of dragoons laughed merrily. The veteran was fairly caught. He stormed out at the commentary upon his confident self-applause, which was the natural result of the apprehensions which could so easily be awakened, and so completely revealed.

"Zounds, sir! Do you make *me* a subject of your merriment!"

But the laughter of the son, and even of the girls, could not be suppressed; and, in a moment after, the veteran himself joined in it.

"Ah! Willie, we are but poor devils, the best of us, with all our pretension! Pass the bottle, sir; the gout will make any man a coward!"

At this moment the sounds of a horn were heard within the enclosure, and Congaree Polly made her appearance, to report, that the famous Pete Blodgit was advancing from the foot of the garden, bearing a white flag.

"The scoundrel! Shoot him down, Willie."

"No, sir, it would only be a bullet wasted upon a buzzard Let us see what the fellow has to report, and to demand. Our policy is to gain time. We want but an hour, if that! But one hour!"

Thus speaking, he rose from the table, and prepared for the reception of the embassador.

"What is that hour to bring forth! Why does he say an

hour?" muttered the old man. His self query had suddenly set him to think.

"Yes," said he solemnly. "Oh! God, what may not an hour bring forth!" and he caught up his pistols, and bade them wheel him to the window which he had undertaken to defend.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FIRST SHOT.

PETER BLODGIT, flag-bearer from the enemy, was welcomed at the entrance of the dwelling by Benny Bowlegs. He was made to dismount and enter the house by the veteran negro, much against his will. His demand was that some member of the household should come out to him; but Benny at once repudiated the suggestion with disgust.

"Wha' you talk 'bout, Pete Blodgit! You 'speck gemplemans to come out yer and 'tan 'pon he legs to talk wid you, and you poor buckrah a setting on you critter all de time? Lord ha' massy, I tell maussa, de kurnel, sich a t'ing, he come out wid de horsewhip. Git you down from you critter, Pete Blodgit, and 'tretch you legs in de passage tell maussa is ready to say—'Show de fellow in!'"

Like the servants of most of the lordly planters of that day, Benny Bowlegs had but small esteem for the class whom he described as "poor buckrah." For Pete Blodgit, as a sample of this class in particular, his disgust and contempt was without limit.

"Hitch you' critter to de tree, Pete Blodgit, and walk in. Walk *light*, you ye'r, and not heabby, wid dem cow ledder shoes o' yourn, for de kurnel likes a pusson to walk accordin' to he character. Ef you walk heaby, he say—'Can't be dat Pete Blodgit hab de imperdence to walk into my house as ef he been somebody!'"

Pete was not the man to resent the scornful counsel thus received, though he was not so obtuse as not to feel it. He knew the sort of person with whom he had to deal, and his fears served to subdue his resentment. He obeyed implicitly—hitched his horse to the tree—the negro offering no assistance

—and, under Benny's escort, was walked into the basement passage—not suffered to ascend into the portion of the building which the family occupied. Here, after a few minutes' delay, he was confronted, to his great surprise, by the major of dragoons.

He thrust out his flag—a ragged handkerchief fastened to a hickory rod—at the approach of Willie Sinclair, half doubting all the while, that it would quite suffice for his protection. But the tones of the major's voice reassured him.

"Well, Blodgit, what have you got there?"

"A flag, major. It's for my purtection, you know, as I'm a a bearer of despatches."

"Ah! you are rising in the world! Well, from whom do you bear despatches?"

"From the men what's in the woods, major."

"And who are they?"

"Well, thar's a dozen on 'em quite. You'll find their names all to this dockyment."

"Yes, but who do they represent? Is it a body of the military?"

"Yes, I reckon. They says so. They've got wo'pons."

"Are they British or Americans, Pete? Under which flag?"

Blodgit had not been duly tutored on this head. He was a little disquieted by the query; but a rapid thought, which taught him that, as Americans, the party would scarcely dare to question Major Sinclair, instantly suggested the propriety of reporting them on the other side.

"Well, major, I reckon they're sodgers of the king."

"So! And you, then, have become a soldier of the king, Pete Blodgit?"

"Lord presarve me, major, no! I ain't no sodger no how, but a man of peace, and a lame pusson to boot. But they forced me to come, major, when I didn't want to, and they swore a most furrocious oath that ef I didn't they'd take my ears off. So that's the how and the why that you sees me hyar."

The major readily received this statement as probable.

"Well, sir, and to whom are your despatches addressed?"

"Well, I reckon to the kurnel, sir, your father."

"How can that be if they are soldiers of the king? My father is a loyalist you know."

"Ah! but they says he ain't."

"Briefly, Pete Blodgit, these fellows are outlaws, and fight on their own hook."

"Well, major, I reckon that's pretty nigh the raal truth in the matter."

Sinclair was not the man to waste time in idle distinctions, regarding such rapscallions as were represented by Pete Blodgit. He knew quite as well as that worthy, the character of the sort of people with whom he dealt; but his object in the dialogue was to gain time. Hence his questions and remarks hitherto. But he had another object when he asked the names and number of the party in the woods.

"I reckon, major, there's nigh on to thirteen persons on horseback."

"Not counting yourself?"

"Oh! Lord, yes, sir. I aint to be counted at all. They makes me do what I'm a-doing."

"I can well believe it, my poor Pete. And now, my good fellow, for their names."

"Oh! I don't know 'em all, only some, but you'll read their names on the dockyment."

"Ah! did they all sign?"

"Yes, they did."

"Let me see the paper."

The bearer of despatches produced a dirty half sheet of that brown wiry paper, which, in sheets of enormous size, was of most common use in those periods, and the major read as follows:—

"To Kurnel Sinkeler:

"These, old Sinkeler, are to signify that ef you don't surrender up our friend and brother officer and sodger, Leftenant Joel Andrews sometimes called 'Hell-fire Dick,' of his royal majesty's regiment of loyal rangers, third company of foragers, we'll have your heart's blood out of your body, and thar shant be stick or stone standing of your big house after we've gone through it. These is to say to you that you must give him up

to the barrer of dispatches, in hafe an hour after you reads 'em, or you may expeck the eternal vengeance of all consarned.

[Signed] "Sam Brydone [*Skin-the-Serpent*]
"Rafe Brunson [*the Trailer*].
"Joe Best.
"Zeke Rodgers.
"Jack Halliday.
"Wm. Toland.
"Benj. Nelson."

Major Sinclair smiled quietly as he read the precious epistle

"And you say, Blodgit, that there are thirteen of these rascals in the woods?"

"Thar's the names."

"Scoundrel! Do you dare to lie to me, when I know that there are but seven of them—all told."

"Lord bless you, major, but thar's thirteen as I'm a mortal sinner."

"Didn't you tell me that all signed. Here are only seven names."

"All that could sign, major. Some kaint write."

The lie was prompt enough; but Sinclair knew that all such would have surely made their marks, the object of the writers being to impress the garrison with their strength and numbers.

"Back to your fellows, and tell them, from me, that we are ready for them were they twice their number; and do you, Blodgit, thank your stars that I do not have you hung up to a swinging limb for bringing me such an impertinent paper."

"Lord, major, I couldn't help myself."

"I believe that; and did I not so believe—did I think you came willingly, I should hang you up in five minutes. Be off now while your skin is whole."

"But, major, they're most mighty detarminate persons—all on 'em—mighty furrocious, and they've got rifles and muskets, and three mighty furrocious dogs—you kaint stand up agin' 'em, with only one poor rifle and double barrel, and they'll not let you git to close quarters."

Sinclair was pleased that Blodgit noted his armory. The weapons had been studiously put in sight—all, at least, that

yer major desired he should see. He smiled at the speech of the other—smiled scornfully—and extending his arm, he said:—

"Be off, Master Blodgit; and if you'll take my counsel you'll take the back track as soon as these rascals shall come on. You have no taste for fighting I know, and there are too many of them to suffer you to share any of the plunder should they succeed. Your share of the game will be its dangers only. Do not suffer me to draw bead or blade upon you—off, and say to those who sent you, that we shall welcome them with wagon-whips if they venture within these grounds."

Blodgit, with a cringing humility bowed himself out, and under Benny's escort mounted his nag and departed, the speed of his horse being accelerated by a smart application of a hickory, which Benny Bowlegs carried in his hand, very much as a field-marshal carries baton or truncheon.

"De mean son ob a skunk! And wha' is we for do now, Mass Major."

"Hither, Benny! Have you got the boys below?"

"All dere, sir, in de berry room wha' Debbil Dick left. Dere's Bull-Head Daby, and Slick Sam, and Snub-Nose Martin, and Cæsar Fogle, and Barney de fiddler, and two, tree more."

"Will they fight, Benny?"

"Ef you only le' 'em see you and yer you, jest when de time come for knock about, den he'll fight."

"We'll keep *them* then, for close quarters! We have one gun, at least, for each quarter of the house, and pistols for half-a-dozen men. Let us now to our preparations, Benny. Call up Little Peter."

Benny disappeared, and Willie Sinclair, muttering as he went:—

"We must seem to consult the old man, at all events," took his way toward the apartment where the veteran was keeping watch at the window he had undertaken to defend. Here, a brief conference ensued between the two, in which the son made a full report of what had taken place between himself and Blodgit, showed the insolent despatch which he had brought, listened patiently to the fierce outbreak of the old aristocrat as he read the document, and then patiently brought him back to the sub-

ject of the proposed defence. In doing this, our young major whom the war had made a politician as well as partisan, adroitly insinuated into the old man's mind all the plans which he had himself formed, for the encounter with the marauders. The veteran was easily imposed upon, and the son left him at his post while he arranged the defence of the house. The negroes were each planted at his post, arms assigned them for close quarters where they were not known to be good shots—and few negroes are good shots—and this done, and Benny Bowlegs and Little Peter, and another fellow, being armed with fowling pieces or rifles, Willie Sinclair hurried up to the chamber for a conference with his sisters.

The upper rooms of the house commanded an extensive view of the whole scene of operations, broken only by occasional clumps of wood, and masses of forest. Before it stretched the avenue, a noble colonnade of oaks and cedars—on the right an open field which had been planted in wheat, but which was now bare, with here and there a pine sapling growing, three or four years old. On the left of the avenue was the wood through which "Debkil Dick" had already made his way, seeking a surer cover in the thickets on the opposite side of the public road. Immediately around the dwelling there was an open area of less than twenty acres, the space only interrupted by kitchen and out-houses. Below, and between the house and the woods where the outlaws were now harbored, was the garden containing some three acres, and near this, in fact adjoining, was the poultry region—a spot which, at another time, might have been sufficiently attractive to our outlaws. But for the ambitious ideas of Dick of Tophet, the outlaws would probably have been quite content with a general cleaning of the hen-roosts.

But to note all these parts of the enclosure required that the four rooms of the upper story should all be occupied with vigilant watchers. In each, accordingly, a negro or two, male or female, was assigned a station. To these, no arms were given. The weapons, whether at close quarters or long shot, being more available from below, in the second story. The hand to hand conflict could only take place below, in or around the basement, or upon the outer steps of the dwelling. The doors opening upon them were now closed, and a couple of sturdy negroes as-

signed to each. For a close struggle the weapons were ample against so small a force as threatened. In addition to swords and pistols, there were knives—every negro carries his own, adequate to slaughtering a steer or hog, or slitting the weasand of a buck;—there were hatchets and clubs of hickory, and even tongs and poker were put in convenient places, ready for the hand-to-hand conflict.

"I have no notion that these things will be required, Carrie," said Willie Sinclair, "for I hardly think that these ruffians will be bold enough to make an assault now that they know I am here. Still, they are desperate men, and the thing is possible—particularly if they have been drinking. As yet, too, their chief leader, Devil Dick, has not appeared among them, and the belief that he is still here and in custody, may work them up to some audacious attempts. But I rather think that they will confine themselves to long shots, and all of them, it is probable, carry rifles. This requires that you should keep yourself and Lottie away from the windows. The negroes can not be easily seen, their black faces offering no such conspicuous contrast to the darkened rooms, as yours and Lottie's would. Only see you that the negroes do not neglect the watch. They can see an object if moving, at thrice a rifle distance, and that will suffice to give us time to guard against all approaches. Only do not be agitated or alarmed. There is no great danger—none to you, my dear, so long as Willie Sinclair can strike a stroke, or lift an arm at all for your protection."

"Do I not know it, Willie? As for the danger—look at me, Willie. Do I show fear?"

"You are a brave girl—worthy to be a soldier's wife! and—if you hear a trumpet, you may look boldly up the avenue; for Peyre St. Julien will certainly be here before sundown."

Then it was that the lips of the young girl trembled, and she said, putting her hand on her brother's wrist:—

"But will he have his troop with him, Willie? Will the outlaws not intercept him, and with their rifles, from under cover——"

"Never fear! The sound of his bugle will be sufficient to disperse them. Where's Lottie?"

"In the blue chamber."

"Let us go to her. You must keep her with you all the while. She may be tempted to show herself at the windows. Lottie!"

The child came.

"Lie down here, Lottie. Cover up. Keep close, and don't get up till sissy tells you. Will you lie down now for Brother Willie, and cover up, and keep close, and don't show yourself at the windows?"

"But Willie, I don't want to lie down. I don't want to sleep. I want to hear. I won't go to the windows. I will sit down with sissy. I know what you mean. There's going to be fighting among the soldiers; and I can't lie down in the bed, Willie, I can't, when there's to be fighting. I *must* sit up and hear; but I promise you, dear bubber Willie, that I won't go nigh the windows."

"Let her sit with me, Willie. I'll answer for her. She shall keep away from the windows. She has promised you."

"To be sure, Willie — when I promise, you know."

He kissed the child; Carrie threw her arms round his neck; then released him, and he hurried below; and, passing from room to room, he made all his preparations, and encouraged, by his frequent presence, his motley forces.

One of these, our old acquaintance, Ben Bowlegs, he drew aside from the rest.

"Ben," said he, "I am going to put you in position elsewhere. Take a pair of these pistols, and the short double-barrelled gun. Our true danger is from the kitchen. If these outlaws make a rush and get behind it, they will cover any window on this side of the house. You must get to the kitchen and hide yourself in the loft. There are two little windows in the back of it which will enable you to prevent them from taking shelter in that quarter. You must steal out and make your way thither at once, with the weapons I have mentioned. The post is so important that I would go there myself, but that I must not leave the house. I must see that the people do their duty here."

"Dat's sartinly de way, Major Willie. I bin t'ink bout de kitchen, meself."

"Quickly then, to your post, and before these fellows begin to attack."

"I gone, Major Willie! I gone!"

And, snatching up gun and pistols, Benny Bowlegs rapidly darted across the space of thirty yards, which separated the kitchen from the dwelling. Thus, with all his precautions taken, our major of dragoons ascended to the place where the veteran was keeping watch, seated comfortably in his arm-chair, his game leg upon its cushions, and two great horseman's pistols in his clutches, with both muzzles ready to give tongues at the half-opened window. His position also enabled him to command one of the doors opening upon the central passage.

"I am not sure, sir," said the major, "that I have had quite as much dinner as I desired."

"Not the worse for it, Willie, if your man Porgy be right in his philosophy. But the things are unremoved. Fall to, if you think proper."

"No! I find it not so easy to eat now. Still that mutton was very fine."

"Yes, but there is a proverb against *cold* mutton. Hack away at that tongue, which I can warrant. It is home cured."

"Ay, and of a quality to cure a man of absenteeism."

"Would it could cure you, Willie!"

"It will not just now, sir. By the way, sir, my friend Porgy insists that the English proverb against cold mutton is all a mistake of taste; that mutton is really more preferable cold than warm."

"Egad, I should have ventured the opinion long ago myself, but that I never take ground against a proverb. I shall certainly be pleased to know this Porgy. Can he fight as well as philosophize?"

"That is the most remarkable of his characteristics — somewhat in the teeth of a proverb also. He fights like a bull-dog, and in action almost seems to lap blood. But he always professes a reluctance to go into action, and insists that nothing but training has kept him all his life from showing a white feather. Come, sir, let me fill you a glass of this Madeira."

"Why not, Willie? I confess to relishing my wine more to-day, than I have done any day within the last six months."

"What! including the time of my Lord Rawdon's visit?"

"Ah!" with a deep sigh—"ah! no! That was an exception. I confess, Willie, that on that occasion I distinctly saw the 'Bottle Reel.'"

"That was a serious error, my dear father," said the son, with a grave shake of the head, "in the case of so *steady* a loyalist."

"Get out, you varlet. Ha!—we are to have it."

A wild scream from the woods, a shot, and the rattling of glass in the upper windows, silenced the conversation, and our major of dragoons was instantly upon the alert.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE LEAGUER—THE RELIEF.

Pete Blodgit, glad to get off without hurt or hinderance from the Barony, whither he had gone only under compulsion of the outlaws, rode with due speed to the thicket where they harbored, and reported the ill success of his mission. The party there, in the absence of Dick of Tophet, was led by Sam Brydone, otherwise Skin-the-Serpent. Brydone was a fellow not very unlike his superior, possessing all his brutal and ruffianly qualities, but his merits only in degree. His cupidity was quite as great, if not greater; and this passion sufficed to urge upon him the assault of the Barony, where he calculated upon profitable pickings, quite as much as his desire to extricate his principal from the captivity into which he had unwarily fallen. As yet, the outlaws had no notion that Dick had escaped; and the plunder of the house was a desire that received an additional impulse in their minds, from the hope to rescue their comrade. They were encouraged by the report of Blodgit, as to the feebleness of the garrison—a single man, even though so well known and greatly feared as Willie Sinclair, not being regarded as likely to offer much resistance to a stout band of seven old forayers. This was the real number of the outlaws, not including Blodgit; their increase of force being due to the arrival of Zeke Rodgers, the fellow who owned the dogs, who had brought with him besides three others, Halliday, Toland, and Nelson, all tories, whose taste for the regular service, under his majesty's officers, had gradually given way to the passion for a more free and easy disposition of their time and persons. They were, all of them, briefly speaking in the language of the country, *outlaws*—cattle-reivers, squatters, houseburners, and plunderers—unrestrained by any laws but those of force, and

reckless equally of all moral restraints, whether of God or of society. They prepared at once for the assault of the Barony.

But they had no plans, no designs—and simply calculated to operate by sheer force of numbers, and the terrors which they might inspire.

"You hear, boys," said Brydone, after Blodgit had made his report—"thar's but one white man we've got to deal with—Willie Sinclair. He's h–ll to fight, we know, but what's one man when we've got the we'pons? Old Sinclair's too lame to git out of his easy-chair, and the niggers ain't of no account, no how, in a scrimmage. What's a rifle, a shot gun, and a few puppy pistols? Not much; when hyar, you see, thar's four on us with rifles, and three with fowling-pieces. All we've got to do is smash the windows with a volley of buckshot from the guns, and then let the men what fires make a rush and git across the garden to the kitchen, and git into kiver behind that. The rifles kin watch doors and windows all the time. First, then, we'll creep up, close as we kin, to the garden-fence, pull off some of the palings, and steal up among the shrubs till we're nigh enough to blaze away. Then let drive at the windows, all three on you, with the shot-guns; then make a rush for the kitchen, and the boys with the rifles will keep their beads resting on door and window, so that any head that lifts to sight you, shall draw a bullet. You hears? Does you all understand?"

"All right, Sam," was the reply; and Halliday, Toland, and Nelson, the men carrying fowling-pieces, prepared for the part assigned them.

The rattling of the window-glass, shattered by the buckshot, which had disturbed the hobanobbing of the veteran and his son, indicated the performance of the first act in this simple little drama.

It sent Willie Sinclair, with due haste, to the upper chambers. He was quite aware that, beyond the smashing of the glass, there could be no damage done, unless his orders, that all parties should keep in cover as he placed them, had been disobeyed.

This was not the case. He found all safe, and Carrie Sinclair seized his arm, as he entered the room, which had chiefly

suffered from the shot—her eye flashing, and no tremor on her frame.

"They have begun, Willie, and now ought we not to have some weapons here? We could surely do something from this quarter, Willie."

"No, Carrie, dear; there is no need to tax your valor. We must only try your patience and endurance, no small part of the education for a soldier and a soldier's wife. Only keep Lottie close to the floor, and keep as closely to the floor yourself as possible. We are quite enough for these fellows below, and there we need all our weapons. But, hark!"

Pistol-shots were heard—one—two.

"That is Benny Bowlegs! I looked for it there. Down, Carrie—close, while I take a peep."

Glancing obliquely through the half-closed shutter, in the direction of the garden, Willie suddenly raised the fowling-piece which he grasped, and fired instantly. He was about to discharge the second barrel, when he promptly drew back, and clasping Carrie about the waist, drew her to the floor with him. In another moment of time, a bullet passed between the shutters, and was buried in the angle of the opposite wall.

"You see, Carrie, you must keep close. These fellows watch every opening. Keep the negroes at the opposite windows. There is no cover on that side for the approach of the rascals within rifle distance. And now a kiss—I must go below. We have tickled some of the scamps, I am sure."

He went below, and forcibly rolled his father back from his station at the window. In the anxiety of the veteran, he had leaned forward upon the jambs, with his pistol cocked and ready, and his game-leg upon the floor, the pillows upon which it rested having slipped off in the eagerness of his movement. He was groaning with pain, but, in his excitement, mentally unconscious of its cause.

"What's done, Willie? Oh! I am hurt somewhere, Willie. I feel the pain of a wound, but where it is, sir, I can not tell, by Heaven!"

"In your foot, sir—your pillow was shot off, sir, and your game leg has got all the hurt."

"Ah! so it is! There! there! Don't touch it for your life,

Harry! I never let any one but Carrie touch it! She gives no pain. Call her down for a moment. You are too rough a nurse."

Carrie appeared, replaced cushions and foot, and was again driven up to the chamber.

"The girl is just as cool as an old soldier. She will make a soldier's wife, sir. Well, Willie, what has been done. There were shots from the kitchen, and above stairs? Did you fire?"

"Emptied one barrel of buck upon a fellow who was sneaking off among the box in the garden."

"Did you stretch him?"

"I think so. I seldom miss; and it could not be more than sixty yards off. But my flash drew a rifle-shot upon the window, and I dared not look."

"They are at the kitchen, are they?"

"They have been; but I suspect they have found the kitchen fires too warm at this time of day. I sent Benny Bowlegs there, well armed, to help the cook. They were his pistols that we heard."

"Benny is cool as a cucumber, and steady as a pine. He will not waste gunpowder. Ha! there is another volley. They must have some dozen guns."

"These discharges are all from fowling-pieces."

"Don't I know that, sir? But there would seem a dozen of them."

"Half the number, and double-barrels would give that fire. They have only broken a few more panes."

"The fools, to waste their ammunition."

"Their purpose is probably to make a rush for the house under the fire. I must look in upon the boys in the basement, and give them a drink all round."

And, turning a silver mug down upon the mouth of a decanter of Jamaica, Willie Sinclair supplied the negroes keeping guard in the great passage and below.

"Boys," he said to the latter, "we'll have a drink all round, that we may be better able to thrash these dirty rascals, should they dare to come. I'll give you drink, and you'll give them the devil. Benny Bowlegs, let me tell you, has already knocked over half a dozen or more, and I have stretched out

as many. I'm only afraid you'll have little or nothing to do."

"Only le' 'em come, maussa, da's all!" was the one response of all, as they drank—drank deep, as a negro knows how to drink—with head thrust out, lips trembling, and eyes already moistened with delight.

"Wait for the word, boys, that's all!"

Then as they began to jabber loudly with each other, promising and boasting of their future performances, our major stopped them—

"Shut up, boys. Barking dogs don't bite—remember that Would you give tongue before you've got the scent? Not a word now! Wait till I give the word—wait till you see me at work—then take hold, and see that you make your teeth meet in the flesh!"

"Le' 'em come, young maussa—da's all!"

And giving them a second sup of the bottle, enough to enliven their courage without enfeebling their strength, Willie Sinclair hurried up-stairs with the empty decanter.

"There's a lull in the storm, Willie."

"Ay, sir, the scamps are in consultation doubtless. They have no head, sir; though where that scoundrel, Devil Dick, may be, it is difficult to conjecture. These fellows really have no plans. They are of the class of bull-heads—that simply know how to rush and butt, and the moment they encounter a wall, they slink off with their tails down. This is their case now. To give us a scare, and under cover of it, rush to the assault, is all that they know how to do. They are like the tiger—disappointed in the first spring, they steal back into the jungle."

"As the case stands, they may fire at us all day."

"They will hardly do that, sir! Like the tiger again, they will wait for night, and then comes our danger! While we have the light to see, they will hardly dare to expose themselves in assault; but, with the darkness, we can do nothing but watch at all the ports, and be prepared as well as we can for the close encounter."

"Surely, Willie, we have nothing then to fear. We can certainly with our force overcome them."

"Ay, sir, butcher them! as by God's help we will!" muttered the other fiercely. "But we must still lose in such a conflict. To conquer these wretches is a very small source of satisfaction; but to know that one life, precious to our hearts, has been sacrificed in doing so, is very terrible."

"It is, Willie; it is;—where are the girls now?"

"Up-stairs, sir, in safety!"

"Willie, my son, I should die of a broken heart—it would kill me, Willie, if one of these dear children suffered at the hands of these outlaws!"

"Need I tell you, father, that my head must be low—my eyes shut—my arm paralyzed—before harm shall come to them! Were it not better, sir, that I should help you up-stairs, sir, where you can have them under your own eye?"

"What, Willie Sinclair, would you have me leave my post?"

"We have enough here, sir;—and—your foot!"

"D—n the foot, sir! What is the pain of the foot when the soul is in agony? *No*, sir; no, Willie, *here* I stick, at my post, ready for the enemy. I see what you fear, Willie; but I do not fear. You think me unequal to the struggle. But you shall see that a man with a brave spirit, is not less a man because he has a crippled limb!"

Willie Sinclair laughed—laughed merrily.

"You are right, sir, right. Only so use your pistols, as to keep the rogues from your toes."

Some popping shots were now heard. Then a pause, and after a little interval a volley. The glass was again shattered—this time directly above the head of the veteran—and the fragments tumbled about his ears in all directions. Had Willie not drawn him away from the window-jambs, he would have been peppered with small shot.

"Swan-shot as I live," said the major, gathering the bits of lead about the floor. "This was delivered from the garden. What can Benny be about? He could surely have touched the rascal in that quarter."

Just then a single shot was heard.

"Ah! there, the old fellow speaks! Well, sir, we must only wait our time. We may have the close hug at nightfall."

And the major hurried away to his several parties, above and

below, to see that they were watchful. There was a lull in the storm of nearly half an hour. The suspense became very irksome to all parties. They could see no enemy — dared not venture to look out — and had no knowledge of what had been done. Suddenly, in the deepest hush, the faint sounds of a bugle were heard.

"Ah!" cried Willie, "he comes at last. We shall now have a dash at these rascals."

"Who comes, Willie?"

"Peyre St. Julien, at the head of as brave a captain's command of troopers as ever drew broadsword."

"St. Julien, ha! I would it had been anybody else!' growled the veteran.

"And why, sir? St. Julien is as noble a fellow as ever crossed charger in battle."

"Ay, sir, but he is a rebel to his king!"

"Why, so am I, sir!"

"True, and the greater my sorrow, Willie; but I do not relish these Frenchmen."

"Why, Lord bless you, sir, he's no more Frenchman than I am!"

"He's the son of a Frenchman, sir, and he has an eye on your sister Carrie; and I prefer that my daughter should not marry any but a man of British stock."

In the impulse of the moment, the father had betrayed himself, so as to reveal the true secret of the cold treatment which St. Julien had always received at his hands. It was only by reserve and coldness that he could repel the approaches of the young man, who was not only of the best blood, but the best character of the country. Willie Sinclair was about to answer with some sharpness, for he was the sworn brother of St. Julien, but a moment's reflection satisfied him that he should rather hurt than help his friend's cause, by entering into any argument, or making any reply. The bugle again sounded, and he disappeared in silence from the apartment. Hurrying up stairs, he encountered Carrie Sinclair in the passage. She too had heard the bugle, and her cheek was flushed, and she now trembled, as she never for an instant had done during the whole leaguer of the outlaws. Willie kissed her cheek, and patting

his arm about her waist, drew her to a window overlooking the entrance by the avenue. At that moment, the whole train of horsemen were wheeling into the enclosure, a gay and gallant troop, their swords flashing in the evening sunlight, and the bugler, at intervals, merrily timing their advance. At their head rode a tall and noble captain, whose white plume floated loftily above his helmet — a single feather of the heron — and whose flashing sword was waved in the direction of the dwelling.

"Strange!" said Willie; "I wonder who leads, Carrie. It is not St. Julien."

He mocked her, and she knew it; and burying her face for a moment in his bosom, she said:—

"It is, Willie! You can not deceive me!"

"Then he has grown stouter since I last saw him, and does not carry himself with half the grace of former times."

"Fie! you tease! But I know you."

And now the strains of the bugle were long and loud; and Willie Sinclair, rushing down stairs, threw open the door of the hall in season to welcome his companion-in-arms at the entrance. Carrie, meanwhile, full of tremors, remained waiting in her chamber. Little Lettie, not discouraged by her sister, had followed her brother down the stairs.

CHAPTER XX.

SCOURING THE WOODS.

But where, while these events were passing, was the fierce and brutal outlaw, Dick of Tophet? One would think that, in an affair which he had begun, the league of the Barony, and in which he was so deeply interested, his presence would not be wanting, nor would he have been but for the necessity of the case, and because of the exercise of that degree of prudence, essential to his own progress, which the old soldier is seldom persuaded to forget.

We have seen by what arts and what endurance of torture he contrived to make his escape from his bonds. When he emerged from the passage-way of the basement, the coast was clear. Congaree Polly, who had been passing to and fro, was now up-stairs busy spreading the table-cloth and setting plates. He could hear the clatter of these below, as she severally laid them on the board. In the court nobody was to be seen but a little group of negroes, and they saw him as he moved away and shouted aloud, not in alarm, but with curiosity as at the sight of any stranger; but little negroes are for ever shouting and squalling, and neither master nor cook gives much heed to their clamors. Dick was more heedful and watched the urchins for awhile before moving—watched the whole court, and that with very dissatisfied expression. He could nowhere see his horse which he had fastened to a neighboring tree. Good Benny Bowlegs, old soldier that he was, had duly cared for the beast—governed by two reasons, first, the good feeling of sympathy which he always entertained for a stout, well-built dragoon horse, and next, as he was one of the trophies of war, a part of the *spolia opima*, which somehow usually occupies no small share of the regards of all old soldiers. Dick of Tophet naturally conjec-

tured that the beast was safely sheltered in the stables of the barony, and, no doubt, totally heedless of his master's condition, munching comfortably upon his corn and fodder. Dick groaned as he reflected upon his loss, but there was no present remedy.

"Let me only git clear out of this fix," he muttered to himself, "and I'll find the pay for him somehow out of this same harrystocratic Sinclair."

He wasted no long time in idle lamentations. The horse was gone, and if he desired to go also in safety, he must needs tramp quickly and on his own legs. He looked out east and west, north and south, shaped out his course in his mind, noted the cover at which he was to strike, and darted forth upon his progress. Again the little negroes yelled and shouted, and clapped their hands and pointed with all their fingers, and rolled about and threw up clouds of dust over their heads; but they failed to attract the attention of anybody whose policy it might be to arrest the flight of the outlaw — and he pushed forward accordingly, without giving them the slightest heed, but with the savage mental determination to knock half a score of them on the head should they happen to cross his path for a moment. He had snatched up a carving-knife from the pile which Congaree Polly had laid down on a table in the lower passage preparatory to laying them out for dinner, and thus armed, he was in the mood to do desperate things, whether with necessity or not.

His course lay along the wood that skirted the lower line of the avenue, but it required a progress of fully a hundred yards over the open court before he could reach this shelter. To strike a route directly below, would be to risk exposure to the negroes whom he now felt sure were traversing the edges of the forest, and along the fence which ran all along the lower line of the settlement. The circuit which he proposed to make was considerable, but it was the only one which promised him a retreat without interruption, and such a retreat was essential in his condition — sore, scorched, suffering, and with scarcely a weapon in his grasp.

Very painful was his progress. In the first moment of his excitement, after getting loose from his bonds, he did not feel

so greatly the torture that he had undergone, and which he had endured with a patient fortitude which would not have discredited the ancient martyrology. In a better cause and nobler career, it would have lifted the ruffian into heroism. But when he began to walk, and had fairly succeeded in obtaining the partial woodland cover along the avenue, his sufferings began to make themselves felt with no ordinary degree of acuteness. By this time, his back was one entire blister—his hands and wrists; his feet and ankles—all shared in the same sort of burning torment, and he writhed at every step over the hot sands, and shrunk from every ray of the direct sun. He realized in degree the pains of the march such as Milton's Satan was forced to take when first recovering from the terrible conflict which precipitated him from the celestial empire. He too walked—

"With uneasy steps
Over the burning marle,....
...."And the torrid clime
Smote on him sore besides."

But still, like the fallen angel he endured and strode away, writhing the while, and groaning—nay sometimes swearing most blasphemously, like the evil one to whom his followers compared him. Still he went forward. A thousand times he felt like casting himself down upon the leaves and grass—this was after he had got into the woods—but then his courage revived—perhaps his fears—and, suffering scalding sensations at every step he plunged forward, slowly but certainly increasing the distance between himself and his late prison-house. He was unpursued—that was something; had it been otherwise, he would have given up the thought of flight, and, in his desperation, would have welcomed the deadliest struggle, only seeking to do as much mischief as he could and not in any way to defend himself. He gained finally the entrance of the avenue—looked up and down the highway to see that he was not pursued, then took the downward route, still in the thicket, but still close beside the public road, not yet venturing to penetrate the deeper thickets where he felt sure that his comrades harbored.

Thus moving, he had made a progress which was considerable

for one in his state of suffering, when he heard or fancied that he heard a distant shot. He stooped his ear to the ground and listened. Again he heard a shot—two, three, or more. But they seemed to be still below him, though greatly to the left, and he thought it not improbable that Sinclair and the two armed negroes had boldly penetrated the forests in pursuit of his comrades. To get certainly in the rear of both parties, it was required that he should still press directly downward, and not venture in more deeply until the sounds of alarm should certainly arise between himself and the Barony. With this policy, and stimulated by the intimations of strife to an eager desire to be at work in the fray himself, he flourished his carving-knife, set his teeth firmly, and hurried on as rapidly as his sufferings would admit. He had gone perhaps a quarter of a mile further, or more, when his ear caught other sounds which compelled a halt and counselled concealment.

"A troop of horse!" he muttered, with an oath. "Who can it be?"

He was at a loss to conjecture.

"Marion's men's t'other side of the river. Inglehardt is up the country. Harden, they say, has gone south. Who, in the name of all the black devils, can it be? It may be some of the 'Yahoos.'"

The Yahoos were another tory banditti; their name, with a strange taste, self-chosen; and not inappropriate, unless too innocently unmeaning.

But the doubt of Dick of Tophet did not interfere to retard his own action. He hurried into a close thicket, sufficiently far from the road to escape any glancing eye, yet near enough himself to distinguish the approaching troopers. They came on at a trot, and went by handsomely, a neat and trim array of forty-five dragoons.

"Marion's men, by the powers! St. Julien's squad. Now, ef I kaint draw off them fellows in season, wou's they catch it!"

Thus muttered the outlaw, as he gathered himself up, with many growls and groans, and once more resumed his upright position. He now struck diagonally across the wood, pushing directly for the heart of the thicket where he supposed his comrades to be, and whence the sound of the firearms had arisen.

But hardly had he gone fifty yards, when he encountered a horseman directly in his track. He threw himself behind a tree as the new-comer approached, and when the latter, who seemed to be in a brown study, drew nigh, the outlaw stretched out his arm suddenly and grasped the bridle of the steed.

"Hello! thar! Lord! who's that? Oh! Fire Dick, is that you?"

The horseman was no less a person than our old acquaintance, worthy Pete Blodgit. He had promptly adopted the counsels of Willie Sinclair, at their last interview, and had seized the first chance to withdraw from his connection with the outlaws, which he did, without beat of drum, at the moment when the band was preparing for the first assault upon the house. They had not noticed his departure; had they done so, it is probable that they would have prevented it; for, though they made no sort of calculations upon him, in respect to the fight, they knew how to use him in affairs which involved no necessity for heroism. Pete knew perfectly well, that, in mere wilfulness of power, they would have detained him, if once they suspected him of any intention to depart. He modestly kept his purpose secret, and stole off while they were pressing forward to their severally-assigned posts for the assault. He was taken all aback—confounded, by the way—by an encounter so totally unexpected with the outlaw, whom, all the while, he supposed to be safely boxed up in the basement or the attic of Sinclair's house. The ordinary terrors which this man's presence inspired in his mind, were duly increased by the sudden and unanticipated meeting with him, but still more by his fierce, wild, and ghastly aspect. His face seemed blotched and bloated, his eyes were bloodshot, and there was a wolfish fierceness in his expression that denoted a great increase of his usual savage ferocity of will.

"Lord ha' mercy! how you skear'd me."

The other grinned horribly as he said:—

"Git down, Pete."

"Git down, leftenant! What must I get down for—what's you guine to do to me?"

"Git down! I ain't a guine to hurt you. I only wants the horse."

"But it's my horse, Dick."

"Never mind! I wants him."

"But you ain't a guine to take my critter?"

"Yes! I must hev' him, Pete. Git down."

"But, Dick, how kin I, when you knows I'm a lame man, and kain't git on, no how, without a critter. I kain't do eny much travelling a-foot."

"And who the h—l's more lame than me?" was the fierce answer of the other. "Don't you see I'm burnt and scalded and blistered up from head to foot, and all a-fighting your battles?"

"Not any battles of mine, Dick," replied the other. "'Twas your own battles all the time, and I wasn't to have eny of the good of it, I know."

"Well, it don't much matter eny how. Thar's not much good of it come to enybody, and ef I don't overhaul our fellows and bring 'em off at once, they won't make the smallest sort of mouthful for St. Julien's dragoons. So git down, Pete, and give me your horse."

"Well, but leftenant—"

"Git down, I tell you."

"But how kin I give up my horse? I'm sure, leftenant, ef you takes him I'll never see him again. Let me go home quiet, Dick."

"Look you, Blodgit, I kain't be a trifling with you one minute of waste of time. Why, to be sure, ef I takes him, you stand a mighty fair chance of never seeing him agin. But what of that. Do you think I cares what your loss may be, when the needcessity is to save them good fellows that's in danger now from St. Julien's troopers! Git down, I say."

"I kain't give up my critter, Dick—I kain't!" was the reply of Blodgit, with an unusual show of determination, for him, and he jerked the bridle of his beast as he spoke, and struck his heels into his flanks, and would have been off without further parley but for the firm grasp which the outlaw had laid upon the bridle.

"You white livered lizard!" roared the outlaw; "and while I'm a wasting time with your provications and prevarications, them good fellows is a gitting themselves chopped up by the dragoons!"

The words were seconded by the most decided action. The

beast was reined back upon his haunches in the twinkling of an eye, and Pete Blodgit, pulled from his back with a gripe of iron, fell prone upon the earth, heavily as a bag of sand. For a moment the carving-knife of Devil Dick was flourished over his head.

"Marcy, Dick! hev' marcy!

"You mean-sperritted skunk, I've hafe a mind to scalp you where you lies: but I ain't got time for it. But jist you wait for it, tell I gits back, and ef I don't take off scalp and ears, it's bekaise I've got religion as I goes. Give me your blasted horn! Quick as lightning."

The horn was delivered to the outlaw; he wound it thrice, a lively strain of alarm, then mounted the beast—an effort that made him groan pitifully, as it seemed to renew all the agonies of the blazing fire at his back and ankles—but he was capable of the effort, though he groaned under it; was soon in the saddle, and away—back at full speed over the ground which Blodgit had just before slowly overcome. At intervals, he wound his horn as he rode; a signal meant to awaken the apprehensions of his associates, and draw them back in season for escape from the troopers of St. Julien. We need not say that, nowise encouraged by the promises held out to him, Blodgit resolved not to wait one moment for the outlaw's return; but, in some degree forgetting his own lameness, he gathered himself up as soon as the other had ridden off, and took his way down the wood with a degree of rapidity which would have been highly creditable to an ordinary man in the full possession of all his limbs and sinews.

Let us return to the Barony. We have seen that Sinclair received his friend St. Julien at the entrance of the mansion; but he did not then suffer him to alight.

"Don't dismount, St. Julien. There's work for us yet. Keep your saddle and put your men on the alert. Ho! there; my horse! We have been beleaguered. Didn't you hear the firing?"

"No! The wind was from us. How beleaguered? By whom?"

"I'll tell you as we ride. Meanwhile, send down some twenty men through the avenue, to make a circuit of a mile below, and dash in upon yonder wood. The outlaws, some

half a dozen or more were there half an hour ago. They are well mounted, but we may overhaul them. We will take a short cut over the fences, and strike at them directly in front. My horse! my horse, there!"

"Our beasts are pretty well knocked up, Willie," was the answer.

"Oh! they will do—they will do! But whether knocked up or not, we must brush that wood before dark. We have had Hell-fire Dick and his gang upon us."

"Ha! I thought that scoundrel was in Inglehardt's troop, and up the country."

"No! no! and Inglehardt's troop is not up the country, I fancy—at least, I have pretty good intelligence that he himself is somewhere about Orangeburg. Have you had any adventure to-day?"

"Slashed to pieces a body of the Yahoos, some fourteen in number, near the mill, on the Four-Holes, only a few miles below 'Bram's Castle."

"Ha! but they had not found him out?"

"Not that we know; but they were coming out of the swamp when we surprised them."

"And where's 'Bram?"

"He will be here to-night with your luggage, under the charge of Corporal Grayson, with half a-dozen troopers."

"You got all the papers."

"All!"

There was some other conversation, until the horse of Sinclair was brought out, all properly caparisoned by Benny Bowlegs. That faithful fellow also appeared, soon after his master was mounted, astride the steed which had been taken from "Devil Dick." St. Julien looked at the negro doubtfully, but Sinclair said, "Let him ride with us. He knows the wood, and may be useful." The little squad, meanwhile, had been detached, according to Sinclair's orders, and had already passed through the avenue, into the main road, for the purpose of making a circuit and taking the outlaws in the rear. In a few moments more, the troop of St. Julien, under the two chiefs, were breaking through the fence behind the garden, and dashing freely into the woods in which the outlaws harbored.

The time allowed Dick of Tophet in warning his comrades of their danger would not have been adequate to the purpose, if they had not themselves taken the alarm, long before the arrival of St. Julien. He met them on the retreat, and a few moments sufficed for explanation."

"We draw'd off," said Sam Brydone, who, in the absence of Dick, had taken the command, "bekaise we seed there was no sort of use trying to do anything before night."

"And where's all your men. You got Zeke Rodgers, didn't you. I heerd his dogs."

"Yes, we got him, to his misfortin'. Thar's his dogs; but he aint fit for nothing better than dog's meat now. He got a hurt in the first rush we made to git behind the kitchen, and he aint so much as hollered since. Bill Toland, too, he came up with Zeke, and he's got more lead in his swallow than he could quite force down. Here's Jack, too, got scraped by a handful of buckshot, I'm a-thinking, but tain't much. It's jest barked him about the shoulders."

"And whar's Joe Best?"

"He's coming on behind—slow enough. He's got to walk his critter all the way, since he's pretty much doubled up with a load somewhere about his hips, and has to lie down pretty much on his horse. Ef he tries to trot or canter he falls into a faint."

"Then they 'll take him, by thunder, and that's next to roping him, I'm thinking."

"'Twon't take much to finish him."

"Well, you kain't stop for him or anybody," cried Dick of Tophet. "Ef I know Willie Sinclair, he'll hev' that troop of St. Julien's scattered about these woods before you kin say Jack Robinson! We must put out as fast as any four legs can go it. We've got the heels of them, and can keep ahead of St. Julien, ef we choose, for though he did put his troop into a trot, when he got in sight of the Barony—jist, I suppose to show off—yet I could see there was no heart in the legs of any of his beasts to make 'em willing. We must ride now, ef we would be able to have a feeling for a hot supper anywhere to-night."

"But I promised to go slow for poor Joe Best."

"We kain't afford it, though he was a better man than Best."

growled the savage Dick, with a sort of humor that spontaneously presents itself where a person's name is naturally so suggestive. "Joe must take his chance, and we must use ours. I tell you we've got nothing to spare. We must go at a gallop, ef we would make the river fur enough below, before night comes. The night and the river swamp is our hope just now. Joe must take his chainces. It's a part of the contract in a scrimmage."

Scoundrels are always selfish of necessity—since it is in selfishness that scoundrelism always has its birth; and the reluctance of the party to leave their wounded comrade was quickly overcome.

"But whar's Nelson?" demanded Brydone, looking round the party. No one could answer.

"He's missing!"

"That's a sufficient report just now. Ef he kaint find himself, he kaint blame us for not finding him. Spur up, boys—no stop for thinking."

"Are you wounded yourself, Dick? You rides as ef you was hurt."

"Ax my back? Look at it, and then drive the spur harder than ever, sence that ought to warn you what may happen to you all, ef you're taken."

"H–ll! you don't say they roasted you?" cried Brydone, as he saw the condition of the other's back at a glance.

"On rid-hot coals, bars of red iron, and a blazing fire at hands and feet! Won't I hev' my revenge for it all! Spur up, fellows. I mustn't be cotched jest yit. I've got to live long enough to roast every critter in that Sinclair Bairony—the cursed infernal harrystocrats!"

Let us leave them as they fly down the country at full speed, and obliquing in the direction of the Santee swamp. The pursuit was hotly commenced by Sinclair and St. Julien. They divided the squadron, and scattered themselves over the wood. Fast they rode, and far they rode—that is to say, as fast and as far as was consistent with a close search, and the jaded condition of their horses. The squad of St. Julien, after awhile, fell in with the wounded outlaw, Joe Best. As he heard their approach, he put the spurs to his horse in the hope to make off,

but the first plunge forward of the steed subjected him to so much agony, that he drew up and checked the beast as suddenly. The ruffian felt his danger—he knew his fate. He was well known to all the men of Marion, and he had been long since outlawed. He drew a pistol from his holsters, and prepared himself for the coming up of his pursuers. When they drew nigh, he fired, and the sword-arm of a common trooper fell powerless at his side, just as he was about to cut the ruffian down. But he could not escape. Half a-score of men were within call of the wounded man, and the report of the pistol brought them up, with St. Julien at their head. At this moment, whether because of his pains or his policy, Joe Best dropped from his horse. The animal was caught in a moment—horses being in even greater demand than men, among the southern partisans—and Best himself was secured in the twinkling of an eye. A couple of dragoons dismounted, and laid hands on him. He lifted the emptied pistol with a feeble arm, and his eyes glared savagely upon his assailants. It was evident that the loss of strength implied no loss of sense or intelligence.

"Who is he? Do you know him?" asked St. Julien.

"An old scamp," was the reply—"no other than Joe Best, who burnt Mother Baldrick's house, and carried off Holman's horses."

"Cloud!" called St. Julien—and as the trooper so called rode up, the captain said:—"search him, Cloud, and bring to me what he may have about him. You know what to do with him."

And thus speaking, St. Julien rode away, followed by all but Cloud and another. These remained with the wounded outlaw. Cloud had dismounted. He now uncoiled a dozen yards of the rope from his saddle, and approached the wounded man.

"What are you guine to do?" demanded Best, "needn't tie a wounded man like me. I'm your prisoner."

"We don't want prisoners," was the reply. "Search him, Parler!"

The pockets of the outlaw were soon emptied, but they revealed little.

"Have you anything to say?" asked Cloud.

"To say! What should I say?" replied the outlaw, looking dubiously.

"I thought you might have some confession to make; but if you haven't, better say your prayers, quickly."

"My prayers! Why, do you mean to kill me without any trial?" The prisoner's voice grew husky.

"You have been tried long ago, and condemned. Be quick. You're to die now. If you have any prayers to say, the sooner you set about it the better."

"You're in airnest, air you?" demanded the outlaw.

"Yes! Have to be! Say your prayers."

"I kaint, and I wont! Ef I'm to hang, why I kaint help it. Do your d—dest!"

In five minutes after, the miserable wretch was convulsively shivering from a swinging limb of the forest, and Cloud and his companion were riding briskly off to join their comrades.

CHAPTER XXI.

A DASH OF SENTIMENT AS PREPARATIVE FOR SUPPER.

THE farther pursuit of the outlaws was unsuccessful. Night had fallen, however, ere the bugles of St. Julien recalled the pursuing party. The search had sufficed, at all events, to expel the robbers from the immediate neighborhood: and this was all that could be done under the circumstances. Had the troop of St. Julien not been utterly fagged out by a long day's hard riding, they would probably have destroyed the whole of the banditti. They were all well mounted, on fleet horses; and in this particular arm of the service the Americans had greatly the advantage of the British. There was no finer cavalry in the world than that of the partisans. Their preponderating strength, in this respect, was the secret of all their successes.

It was at the bottom of the garden of the Barony, that the officers held their rendezvous, and that the several reports of their lieutenants were made. Here they found the bodies of two of the outlaws who had been slain, one by the pistol of Benny Bowlegs behind the kitchen, the other by Willie Sinclair's buckshot, from the dwelling. The two victims were Zeke Rodgers and Bill Toland. They were both quite dead when the troopers came up, and were hastily buried by the negroes, in the neighboring woods. The robbers had thus lost three of their gang slain outright—no small assessment upon their small capital of strength. Besides the scorchings, self-bestowed, of Dick of Tophet, Jack Halliday had been sorely wounded, and Ben Nelson was still missing. Whether wounded or not, he had escaped the search of the dragoons.

"We can do nothing more to-night, Peyre," said the major, "and the rest of these rascals will be beyond pursuit by morn-

ing. At all events, they have had a taste of trouble which will make them somewhat more cautious. Let us now go to the house, and see after some supper. I suppose your fellows have an appetite."

"Are all well, Sinclair?"

"All but my father; and his gout leaves him never wholly well. The excitement of this affair has rather helped him. He actually took post with sword and pistol at one of the entrances, with all the eagerness of a young soldier on his first campaign."

"I take for granted, Sinclair, that his love for me has not undergone any great increase."

"No, Peyre," answered the other, with a laugh—"he still holds both of us as rebels to his sovereign. This one objection waived, and, I fancy, there is no other more serious offence in either of us. And, for our objects, we must wait events, and bear ourselves patiently. You may find him querulous and cold, Peyre, but for my sake, do not notice anything of the sort. He is old, remember, a bigoted loyalist, and—"

"Nay, Sinclair, it needs not! I am quite well aware of what is due to him, by way of allowance; and for *her* sake, if not yours and my own, I shall be even submissive. You know I am very meek of temper."

"Of manner, at all events, Peyre, and that is all that is needed in this case. But give your orders. Let your men bivouac along the avenue, or, if you please, on the edge of the wood."

We need not note the disposition of the troop, but will accompany the two officers to the dwelling. Here they found every room alight. The parlor was ready for the reception of company, and the servants were busy in spreading a double table in the supper-room. Colonel Sinclair had had himself wheeled into the parlor, and sat in state fronting the entrance, with his favorite leg resting upon a cushioned stool. Lottie was playing in the piazza, and eagerly looking out for the approach of the dragoons, their returning bugles having been heard some time before. Carrie, meanwhile, was in her chamber, making certain preparations which showed her not more unmindful than any other of her sex, in respect to the appearance which she should make before her guests, one of whom, we are to remem-

ber, was her lover. Though one of the least affected, least coquettish, least vain, of all the damsels of our acquaintance—and at no time very solicitous about personal display—yet, on this occasion, Carry was somewhat hard to please in the adjustment of her toilet. When she did appear, it was in very simple fashion, it is true: in a light robe of blue, suitable for midsummer, her hair arranged, as was then the style, in tresses terminating in ringlets on her shoulder, and a single white flower resting upon her bosom. She was very lovely in this simple habit, which suited her style of beauty exactly—a fair, well-formed Saxon face, with soft brown hair, a complexion of brilliant white and red, large, deep blue eyes, and an eager buoyant expression of countenance showing a frank nature, and a generous, impulsive soul.

The old man was impatient of her delay. He conjectured what engaged her in her chamber so long, and was divided in his humors in respect to her supposed employment. No one had more pride in his daughter than Colonel Sinclair—no one could more have desired that she should appear to advantage—and had the expected guests been Lord Rawdon and his suite, the imperious baron would have insisted upon all proper feminine preparations. But he was not so well pleased to think that all her painstaking was to be wasted on the eyes of a rebel-captain and his troop—that captain being, as he phrased it, the son of one of "those frog-eating Frenchmen of Craven county!" Knowing that St. Julien had a penchant for his daughter—for there is a past history of their intimacy which we must leave our readers to gather from the context—and half-fearing and suspecting that Carrie rather favored than discouraged the addresses of the young man, and that Willie Sinclair had been his fast friend always, any preparation of his daughter, for the reception of the unwelcome guest, would have been thought too great an expenditure of consideration upon him. Not that old Sinclair knew anything unfavorable of Peyre St. Julien. On the contrary, he had every reason to believe that he was a man of honor, as he was known to be a gentleman. But he was a rebel; and that was a sufficient reason at a moment, certainly, when rebellion was supposed not to be a thriving enterprise, and the old man entertained, besides, a hearty old English

prejudice, then not uncommon in this country, against all of Gallic origin. Willie Sinclair had more than once battled this prejudice in behalf of his friend; but not, indeed, with any reference to the desires of the latter for the hand of his sister. He well knew that the time was not yet come for the discussion of this object, and that nothing certainly could be effected in behalf of his friend's suit while the event of the war was doubtful.

"But," as he said to St. Julien, "as marriage just now would be totally out of the question, there is no need that we should be precipitate. We must both wait, Peyre, for a calmer season. War leaves no opportunity, and but little time for love!"

And, to this suggestion, Peyre St. Julien assented. He was a lover, and a fond one; but he was one of those men whose resolves are only strengthened by delay; whom opposition only arms with determination, and who never suffer themselves to lose a game, by the precipitate desire for its profits. Besides, he had his securities, and in these lay a certain amount of consolation. Carrie Sinclair's eyes had answered to his own sufficiently; and he knew enough of her nature to know that she was as firm and tenacious of character, as she was frank and generous of soul. His confidence in her faith, though declared only by her eyes, left him in no apprehension of any capricious change in her sympathies.

At length, the troop filing into the avenue made their appearance.

"Here they come, papa! Here they come!" cried Lottie. "Look what handsome horses! See how they ride! And here comes Bubber Willie and Captain Peyre!"

And the little girl danced and clapped her hands, and ran to and fro, between parlor and piazza, until the two officers were seen ascending the steps. Then she darted out, and soon shared in the caresses of both alternately, St. Julian bringing her into the parlor on his shoulder. He set her down gently with a kiss, approached the colonel, and, bowing respectfully, he offered him his hand in silence.

The other took it civilly, not cordially, as he said:—

"Glad to see you, sir; glad to see you. You came seasonably to our relief; many thanks, sir, many thanks; though, I

fancy, these rascals of banditti had already received a sufficient dressing at our hands to make them sheer off. In fact they were gone—in full retreat, sir—before you made your appearance."

"They had certainly no motive to remain, sir," was the quiet and gentlemanly reply of St. Julien.

"Ay," cried Willie Sinclair, "they got more than they came for; two men slain outright, and others no doubt wounded, they paid heavily for their enterprise. But their very losses were calculated to stimulate their ferocity. What I dreaded was the approach of night, when they could have made a rush upon us from all the points of the compass at the same moment, and when our fire could have had but little effect in preventing their approach."

"But what had we to fear from a hand-to-hand contest, with fifty negroes in the house?"

"Oh! I do not doubt, sir, that we should have beaten the rascals off—butchered them all, perhaps—nay, I'm pretty sure we should have done so—but I confess that the mere victory over such rapscallions, at the expense of any precious lives—nay, at the cost of one poor negro in the conflict—held forth but little temptation in my eyes. I rejoice that the coming of St. Julien has given us security against this danger."

"So it has!" exclaimed Colonel Sinclair—his sense of justice prevailing—"so it has, Mr. St. Julien"—he could not bring himself to accord the military title to a rebel captain—"and I thank you, sir, for your presence. I am glad to see you here, sir."

This was said rather stiffly; but it was honestly said. Our baron was a man of prejudices, but, give him breathing-time, and his conscientiousness always prevailed over his prejudices.

At this moment Carrie Sinclair appeared. The guest rose to meet her. Their hands met. In those days, the lady of the house always gave her hand to the visiter when he was of the same rank. In all other cases she simply bowed, and in such a way as to discourage any closer approach. The case is somewhat altered now, and the discrimination between the two classes, though still, in most respects, observed in the cities, is apt to be overlooked in the country. We are sorry for it. The distinction is a proper one, where ladies are concerned. The

failure to observe it, is apt to encourage the inferior to aspirations which end only in his mortification.

Colonel Sinclair's eye watched the meeting of the parties with some interest. But he saw nothing to offend him. The manner of St. Julien was calm and respectful — nay, seemingly cold. That of Carrie was easy, self-possessed, and quiet, and she seated herself near her brother. One word in respect to the personal appearance of St. Julien. He was of middle size for our country — some five feet eight inches high, well made, but slender, of good muscle, of lithe frame, and vigorous muscle. His face was pale, his eye black, large, and vigilant, his hair of the same color, worn long, probably as much because of the want of a barber, as his own taste. It hung down upon his back, and was soft and fine; his nose was aquiline, his mouth well formed, and showing very white teeth. His brow was lofty and full, the eyebrows black and thick. His air was that of a well-bred gentleman, very quiet, simple, and unobtrusive. In a word, he was one of those happy temperaments *whom you never take by surprise*. Yet he was a man of warm feelings, and even violent passions.

"You have ridden far to-day, Mr. St. Julien."

"Some forty-four miles, sir; but our troop would not have so much felt the ride, had it not been for a little brush with a body of Yahoos, near the Four-Holes."

"I hope you demolished those wretches utterly."

"We did something toward it, sir."

There was a pause. At length the veteran resumed:—

"I do not know what the peaceable inhabitants of the country are to do, with these squads of banditti roaming about the forests. Nobody is secure. Their object is plunder only. This wretched rebellion has deprived us of all our securities."

This was an ungenerous speech, considering who were his guests. It was, however, by no means a *deliberate* offence, on the part of our loyalist baron. It was simply his ordinary reflection. A slight smile on the lips of St. Julien, found its interpretation from the tongue of Willie Sinclair, who said quickly:—

"It so happens, father, that all these rascals, Scophilites, Yahoos, foragers, tories, by whatever name they may be called,

are all in the king's commission. They all claim, with yourself, to be busy in the work of putting down rebellion."

"Well, sir, does it make anything against the authority that the agent should abuse the trust?"

"Yes, sir, when the authority knows perfectly the sort of agent which it chooses. The Scophilites and Yahoos, sir, were notorious long before the beginning of this war."

"Well, sir, even allowing this to be quite true, yet, in a rebellion such as this, which finds a whole people ungrateful, I hold that the king has a perfect right to subsidise any agent."

"If I concede what you claim, my dear father—which I do not—it necessarily follows that nobody has a right to complain that the rascal, endowed with a trust, continues to be a rascal, in spite of the king's commission. You, in particular, who profess to believe that George of England can do no wrong, must quiet all those murmurs which resent the civilities of George's agents."

"Sir, I will be obliged to you if you will speak in more respectful language of our king."

"No king of mine, sir;—but I am willing to defer to your wishes. I wish to speak of him as little as possible, and would you suffer it, sir, should gladly forbear this class of subjects. I find it more pleasant to think of the good cheer I had to-day. What had you for dinner to-day, St Julien?"

"Hope of supper to-night, major."

"What! no dinner, Mr. St. Julien?" cried the old man. "Carrie, do see that supper is not a moment delayed. Sir, you shall have supper, with as hearty a welcome as if you were not a rebel."

"My stomach is a loyal one, at least, colonel," was the quiet reply of St. Julien. Carrie Sinclair had disappeared.

Not to talk of the war was scarcely possible. There was no other topic. The necessity of running into it was unavoidable, and, with the best intention of forbearance in the world, our baron soon after found himself talking of Lord Rawdon and Lord Edward Fitzgerald.

"Have you met with Lord Edward, Mr. St. Julien?" he asked of his guest.

"I have not had that honor, colonel."

"You will be delighted with him. He is a fine looking fellow darkly handsome, with fine eyes, and a peculiar mouth. He is as noble as handsome, sir; a very noble fellow; all ardor and impulse, and capable of the very highest heroism. I should be sorry that you should meet as enemies, Mr. St. Julien—"

"And why, sir?" demanded Willie Sinclair, with some little pique. "I, for one, as the friend of Peyre St. Julien would have no dread of the result in an encounter."

This speech taught the veteran the doubtful character of his own remark.

"Oh! Mr. St. Julien, I did not mean that; I have no doubt you would do your duty, sir; and I am far from venturing an opinion as to the result of a conflict between you."

"I take that for granted, Col. Sinclair."

"Sir, you only do me justice. But I will say no more. It seems impossible to escape a blunder, the moment we happen to speak of any of the parties in this accursed war. Sir, will you not agree with me to damn this war? I say, sir—damn this war! This most abominable, unnatural war, which will not suffer a gentleman to declare his honest natural sentiments Sir—Mr. Julien, be pleased to say damn this war."

"With great pleasure, Col. Sinclair—damn this war!"

"And I echo the sentiment," cried Willie,—"D—n this war! —let me add, sir, an amendment—" to his father,—"and d—n the inventors of it!"

"And who do you call the inventors of it, sir?" demanded the old man sharply.

"Ah! sir? into that question we need not inquire. You will have one notion, I another. It matters not, sir, who is right, —the war being unnatural and abominable, I ask of you to say—d—n the inventors of it?"

"Well, sir, I do, believing them to be your infernal Congress and——"

"No more, sir, you have already said a syllable or two too much. You old gentlemen presume a little upon your years to be a-talking, sir; you know not when to stop. I will not imitate you, since my purpose is not to provoke an interminable dispute. The moment that gentlemen learn the fact that opinions among the party are diametrically opposite on one subject, they

have but one rule, and that is to refrain, unless their object is to provoke a quarrel. Now sir, your object is not to provoke a quarrel, since I am your son, and can not fight you, and Capt. St. Julien being your guest, you can not fight him. We must accordingly steer clear of politics, and, by the way, sir, talking of Sir Edward Fitzgerald, did he tell you, sir, that he is engaged to be married to a Miss Sandford, a lady of great beauty and wit, with whom he so flirted, just before coming to America, at the castle of Lord Shannon, that, the story goes in Charleston, she is about to follow him to this country!"

The colonel raised his eyebrows in consternation.

"Engaged! Impossible! How should you know what is the talk in Charleston."

"I ought to know. I have been in that goodly city within the last few days!"

"Ha! there is treachery at work then! Say, sir, by whom were you sheltered there, and what was your object?"

"My object is briefly told. I wished to select house and grounds for my summer residence, after the evacuation, and they can be procured at small cost when that event occurs. I wished to put my agent on the alert, so that I may not lose the season. As to the person who sheltered me, I have only to say it was a fair lady; gallantry can concede no more, and courtesy will not ask so much. In regard to the treachery, sir, do you not see that any talk on this hand will bring us back to the forbidden subject. In your loyalty, sir, you must not lose sight of what is due to the gentleman."

"Did you ever hear such an impertinent son, Mr. St. Julien? But he is right, after a fashion of his own. I am too old a subject of the king, Mr. St. Julien, not to forget, in my zeal, sometimes, what is due to the company. Pray pardon it. In respect to Lord Edward Fitzgerald, my son, I don't believe a word of your report. I fancy it is a fabrication of your own, and that you have not been in Charleston."

"Ay, but I have, sir."

"Why, sir, do you not know that you incur the peril of the gallows."

"I am not alone, sir; the thing is frequent."

"You are bold, sir. But of this report of Lord Edward."

"It *is* the report. The fact is, sir, that the good ladies of Charleston speak of Lord Edward as something of a flirt—a young cavalier of very flexible affections—who finds a new flame wherever he goes."

"What a slander! The young man, when here, seemed rather demure than otherwise. I confess he was very attentive to Carrie, but without any seeming purpose of display. He was—"

"My dear father, in love, and fashion, and gallantry, and display, everything has undergone a change since your time.—"

At this moment Carrie re-entered the room. Her appearance probably suggested to the major of dragoons a portion of what he should say.

"Then," he continued, "if you happened to be in attendance upon a fair damsel, and a musical instrument of any sort happened to be at hand, you were expected to solicit her to play; it was one part of the code of courtesy that you should escort her to the instrument, her finger-tips in yours, you bowing half to the ground, she smiling to the skies all the way as you went; and when you seated her you bowed again to the ground, your disengaged hand upon your enthralled heart, and she still smiling as graciously as if acknowledging the last of mortal favors. Then, as she played and sang, you stood behind or beside her chair, and fell, or rose into raptures at every stave, until at the close you cried—'Oh! what divine enchanting ravishments!' and, with a deep-drawn sigh, such as an air-pump might utter as it sucks away the last breath from an exhausted receiver, you again took the lady's tips between yours, and with mutual smiles and bows escorted her back to her former place."

"Pappy! you don't mean to say that *I* ever practised any of this ridiculous sort of behavior?"

"No doubt of it, sir, when your joints were a trifle more flexible than now. But such was the behavior, and, absurdly tender and impressive as it was, it never, in those days, was held to bind either of the parties thus playing the fool, in any mortal or spiritual engagements. But the case is altered now, and even you, sir,—" to the father—"even you, sir, are evidently disposed to subscribe to the prevailing notion that when a blockhead behaves after this fashion, there's something in it."

"How, sir,—what mean you—I believe in such nonsense?"

"But it is evident you do, sir, whatever you may think; for look you, here come my Lord Rawdon and my Lord Edward Fitzgerald; and the younger of these two scapegrace Irish lords, plays courtier to my sister Carrie, and by her finger tips he conducts her to the harpsichord, and she sings for him and plays for him, and he stands over her all the while looking his raptures up at the ceiling, and thrusting his hands into his hair, and sighing sentimentally, and imploring in subdued tones for "one more divine song from those divine lips,"—playing the foppish sentimentalist as the young foplings of the time of Charles the Second used to do, your Sedleys and Rochesters and Ethereges, Savilles, and Lovells; and you jump headlong to the conclusion that all this is love—that our poor rustic sister has made a conquest of a lord, and all that sort of thing, and your dream now is of ennobling the family—having a lord in it, and probably seeing before you die——"

The baron silenced him with a roar.

"Zounds, sir, do you hold me to be a fool!"

"By no means, sir, but the wisest man is hardly wise when his peculiar weakness is assailed. Now, you are a born aristocrat, and both of these Irish lords see the way to your sympathies. They have flattered you by attentions which you suppose to be peculiar, and what would be a commonplace civility in a court, you find to be a special committal in a wild country like ours. And you are filling my poor little sister's head with all sorts of notions of conquest, until she too begins to think of foreign conquest, and of stars and garters, and of a presentation at court, and heaven knows what besides, in the shape of high society, state, and grand establishments, among the British nobility."

"Now, Mr. St. Julien," exclaimed the old man, stifling his anger, and striving to respond in the same quizzical humor with his son—"would not anybody suppose from this puppy's nonsense, so seriously stated, that there was some truth in all this statement; that I had really been playing the fool with these Irish lords, and that my head was really turned with their attentions? And all his invention comes from the simple statement which I made him, that they had been here, and spent a

night with me. As for my daughter, sir, I see no reason why she should be flattered by any man's attentions, or any lord's. She is worthy, sir—to my notion—of any, the noblest person in the three kingdoms; and it is a mere scandal to speak of her, as being delighted with the favor of my Lord Edward. In truth, sir, she was hardly polite to him. Yet he was attentive—very attentive—though by no means guilty of any such foppish excruciations as that young puppy would insinuate."

Here Carrie herself interrupted playfully.

"Now, papa, don't pretend to lessen the merits of the conquest I had made. I protest against both your account and Willie's; and do complain of the disposition which you both show, to deprive me of the secret satisfaction which I feel in the visit of these noble lords. You, my father, are of the opinion that my Lord Rawdon came here on political accounts, to obtain your counsels in respect to the war and the country; and you took good care to inform him of all he wished to learn, and, I fancy, a great deal more; you, Willie, have a notion that, knowing British power to be declining everywhere in Carolina, my lord only came hither to prevent by conciliation the defection from the good cause of so strong a supporter of royal government. You are both decidedly wrong. He came hither for no other purpose than to introduce my Lord Edward Fitzgerald. He had heard of me in Ireland; he had exchanged from the East India army into the 19th regiment, as soon as he found that its destination was Carolina; and no sooner does he arrive, than he volunteers as an aid to my Lord Rawdon, and persuades his lordship to visit the Barony, simply to get a sight of myself, and when he did get a sight of me, and heard me play and sing, it was all over with him. I protest that he was in raptures, and that Willie's picture, though something of a caricature, was yet so very like the truth, that, in simple honesty, I am compelled to recognise the portrait. There, gentlemen, you have my version of this true history. It is such as a young damsel alone could furnish,—who sees more deeply into the true motives of Irish lords than anybody else. You see how everything hangs together in nicely-adjusted connection; how the parts fit; the cause and the effect equally discernible. You see how earnest was the aim of my Lord Edward; with what love-

like tenacity he pursued it; at what sacrifice of comfort; at what risk of life; and you see the result;—he has come—he has seen, and I have conquered. Pray now, if you are gentlemen, do not strive to lessen the merits of my conquest, or make me doubtful of my lover. But, from sentiment to supper; I see the servant beckons us."

And she rose gracefully as she spoke, and took the arm of her brother.

"What a conceited baggage!" exclaimed the veteran. "But"—shaking his head more seriously, he added—"she is half right. I do believe my Lord Edward has lost his heart!"

Willie laughed merrily, and a slight smile dawned upon the small and well-cut mouth of St. Julien. Little Peter, at this moment appeared, to wheel the colonel into the supper-room; and the scene changed in a few seconds to the latter apartment.

CHAPTER XXII.

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAMING.

In the good old times—and we are too apt to suppose that all old times were good in comparison with our own present;—an absurd notion, natural to all persons who are beginning to get old themselves;—in the good old times, supper was a repast of great significance, and not a little state with all who claimed to derive from an English original. Our baron did not abridge in any degree the solemn importance of the meal. But we are not disposed to catalogue on the present occasion the good things on table. Our novelists, following Walter Scott, have indulged in such details *ad nauseam;* and in reporting the attractive varieties of viands, which provoked the appetites of their *dramatis personæ*, they have too frequently taken away all the appetites of their readers. There is, in all the Bull family, a great desire to see a well-spread table. It would seem that cold baked meats could even be a source of warm delight to mere spectators of the feast; and charity dinners will still be honored with the presence of numbers, who scan eagerly the performances of voracious urchins whom they feed from the hands of benevolence. Whether it is that they delight to see how well hunger can feed, or that their pleasure arises from the unwonted display of plum-pudding charities—a feast one day in the year, in marvellous contrast to the famine of the other three hundred and sixty-four days—is a question which the ascetic philosopher may decide for himself, the point is one which shall not interfere with our story. For a like reason, we shall content ourselves with saying simply that the supper table at the Sinclair Barony, on the present occasion, was, as usual, amply spread, and with a sufficient variety to pacify the hunger of any dragoon officer in any service—a class of the military in respect to whom the appetite is said always to be of proverbial ex-

cellence. There were meats cold and warm, breadstuffs of wheat, rice, and corn; toasts and cakes; and—luxuries rarely beheld by American eyes at this period—hot cups of tea and coffee, sent out their aromatic sweets at every plate upon the board. The young lieutenants, Cordes, Mazyek, and Postell, were invited to be sharers in the feast; while, under Willie Sinclair's directions, the whole body of dragoons were provided with a smoking supper at their *bivouac* in the great avenue.

Carrie Sinclair presided as hostess; her brother officiating in the place of the baron, whose game leg required cushions, and a table to himself. But he sate close at hand, and mingled cheerfully in the conversation and the feast, as became the proprietor. And the gentlemen feasted with a due sense of the merits of the viands; and Carrie was kept busy in the lady-like employment—which a true lady can make so graceful—of adjusting the degree of cream and sugar to those cups, "which not inebriate," but cheer. And, excepting the clatter of plates, knives and forks, there was silence round the table "for a time."

But the first vigorous workings of appetite over, the chat began; and soon the great silver tray, with its finely cut crystal, was set on the table, six goodly bottles, each with some choice French or Spanish *liqueur*. This constituted, in those good old times, a necessary feature of a planter's supper-table, as essential as the tea and coffee; and sometimes the lady condescended to sip of the celestial blue, or red, or amber drops, at the entreaty of the gentlemen—i. e., be it remembered, when it could no longer be disguised from a scandalous, and prying world, that the aforesaid lady had fairly reached that certain age, about which there can be no certainty. We suppose it hardly necessary to say that Carrie Sinclair was still in profound ignorance of the peculiar virtues of any of the said *liqueurs*. Her father, however, had the tray handed him, and filling one of those tiny glasses, which were specially appropriated to these fine cordials, he sent the tray round to the several guests.

"Gentlemen," said he, "do me honor in a glass of cordial—I am happy to see you here."

They drank. A bugle sounded from without, and the young lieutenants rose, and with courtly bows, took their leave, with

looks that would have lingered still. But the duty was a strict one. St. Julien alone remained with the colonel, Willie Sinclair, and Carrie; and a pleasant but casual conversation followed, which our space will not suffer us to put on record. In this conversation St. Julien mingled sparingly; but what he said, was, as usual, marked by a quiet grace, good sense, and propriety, which insensibly had its effect upon the veteran. At length Carrie rose and left the room for the parlor. St. Julien kept his seat for a while, then followed her. Seeing this, his old twinge of jealousy returned, like a twinge of the gout to the foot, and troubled the soul of the veteran. He hallooed for Little Peter to wheel him into the parlor also, but Willie Sinclair arrested the movement.

"Not yet, my dear father, if you please. I must have some serious talk with you, and this is probably the only chance we have, for you will soon retire, and I shall have to leave the Barony before you are awake in the morning."

"Why so soon, Willie."

"I have a great deal to do to-morrow, sir, and shall have to ride fast for the next three days, to accomplish the various tasks assigned me."

"This reminds me, Willie, that I have a subject of very serious talk with you. Why, sir, are you in this ungentlemanly disguise. If you have a military command, why reject the uniform, which, whether I approve the cause or not, is on the face of it significant of an honorable military service. In this disguise, my son, you endanger life and honor equally. It increases tenfold the horror and anxiety which I feel in consequence of your present connection. I now tremble—not, sir, that you may be slain in battle—for this is not necessarily a dishonoring fate, though you perish in an improper cause—but with the dread, sir, that a son of mine may be destined to a felon's death."

"The risks of war are always various, as they are always serious, my father. In the performance of important duties, such as the heart as well as head acknowledges, we are not suffered to pick and choose between them. You are right in supposing that I incur some extra risks in addition to those of mere battle; but the end which I aim at is of such vital impor-

tance to our cause, that I am compelled to shut my eyes to its superior perils. Of course, I can not tell you what these duties are. I trust, however, that this week will end the peculiar service in which I am now engaged, and I shall then resume my command in the fields of open warfare. Let this suffice; a single week or two will be sufficient for my purposes."

"But in that week or two, Willie—in that short period of time—what may not happen! Oh! Willie, my son, greatly as you have vexed and disappointed me in the course you have thought proper to pursue, I will forgive you all, if you will only cast off these mean disguises, and appear in your proper character. Now that I see your present employment, the horrible picture of the cord and scaffold are ever before my eyes. Remember André!"

The son was touched at the sudden show of feeling in the old man. His eyes filled. He took his father's hand.

"Believe me, sir, no one more bitterly regrets than myself that any act of mine should give you pain, or startle you with a moment's apprehension. I trust, sir, that I feel I would gladly die to make you happy. But my opinions and sentiments involve a duty of performance, and one duty has inevitably grown out of another. It will end soon—this, the most painful and perilous part of it—and you shall then be relieved from all farther anxiety on this score."

"You have passed without a flag, within the British posts. Willie—you meditate doing so again."

"I can tell you nothing, sir, upon the subject. It is only proper that you should know nothing—not because it would harm our cause, but as it would make your relations somewhat awkward in any future meeting with the officers of the British army."

"Oh! do not heed me in this matter."

"I must heed everything, equally on your account, my own, and that of the service in which I am engaged. Let us now talk of a subject which more immediately concerns yourself and my sisters."

"What do you mean, Willie?"

"You will all have to leave the Barony, sir, and the sooner you do so the better This region will shortly become the ac-

tive scene of war. Here will be the shock of the contending armies. The whole country between the Santee and the Edisto will constitute but one vast theatre of action, more or less employed, and for a period more or less prolonged; and every spot of this precinct will be traversed alternately by conflicting armies. They will rock to and fro over the country, and the bloodiest trials of strength may take place at your very door. Of course, all will be confusion, insecurity, and absolute danger. Neither party will be able to afford protection against the lawless bands that hover along the track of armies, and snatch at spoil whenever it offers. You can not desire to linger in such a region, under such circumstances; and my counsel is that you remove, within a week if possible, across the Santee, and take up your abode with Aunt Malcolm."

For a moment the old man was confounded. When he recovered himself, he said:—

"And, pray, from what reasons do you gather the prospect of war in this neighborhood?"

"It is almost inevitable. Here the British general will be required to make his last stand."

"Pshaw! the old story! Do you hope to make me believe any such nonsense, when I know that my Lord Rawdon has relieved Ninety-Six, and has driven your blacksmith commander out of the country."

"He did not drive him far, sir, and the game is reversed. Lord Rawdon is even now in full retreat."

"Impossible, sir! Impossible!"

"But true, nevertheless. Ninety-Six is abandoned; and in proof of the acknowledged incapacity of the British forces to hold the country, the loyalists of Ninety-Six district are now on the march; men, women, children, goods, and chattels, under Cruger's escort, seeking a last refuge within the walls of Charleston."

"Not a word of this will I believe."

"On my honor, sir, it is all true. Lord Rawdon's successes were wholly momentary. The arrival of three fresh regiments at Charleston—not destined for service here—enabled him to make a rapid march for the relief of Ninety-Six. That duty done, he feels himself unable to retain the post he has relieved.

His only hope was to save the garrison, and cover the exodus of the loyalist inhabitants. His force is inadequate for more."

"But there will be new regiments from Great Britain."

"That is impossible. Her resources are exhausted; and these troops that have come out from Ireland are not to be relied on. I am able to assure you, that their officers are scarcely able to keep them in subjection, and numbers desert daily. I do not deceive you in anything. But, whether the British receive re-enforcements or not—whether they recover their power, or not—this region is doomed to be the theatre of war! The armies will ravage it; and you may judge, for yourself, from the events of *this* day, what will be the security of your family, when the marauders shall become hundreds, where there are now but scores. Hundreds lurk in the wake, and upon the wings, of both armies, whom neither army can catch or control. Let me entreat you, sir, to be warned in season, and to retire from the region till it is relieved from the presence of both armies. A month or two of absence will suffice. The British will be compelled to take shelter in Charleston before Christmas."

A smile curled the lip of the veteran. His son saw it, and hastily continued:—

"Do not, my dear father, suffer your intense loyalty to betray your understanding. I do not deal in prophecy, but in simple fact, of which your own reason may assure you at any moment. Look at the state of the case. You have seen the British recently abandoning post after post; contracting their sphere of operations; relieving a post merely to leave it to the enemy; withdrawing from their homes a whole community, as no longer able to protect them; hiring foreign mercenaries; unable to rely upon their Irish subsidies, *now* almost the only source upon which they can count for any; and under continual apprehension in Charleston, their chief garrison, which betrays either their timidity or their conscious weakness."

"Oh! that is because Charleston is entrusted to such a dirty scoundrel as Balfour."

"No, sir! Balfour is a selfish and dastardly rogue, but he has not neglected the interests of his king, though he has grievously mistaken them. He could do no better with the

means allowed him. His means are now exhausted. Rawdon's are exhausted. Rawdon is an able man, one of the ablest of the British army, but he is sick of the service, and he foresees its disasters. He is now claiming to be an invalid—"

"Sir, I tell you, my Lord Rawdon is in as fine health as any man I ever saw. Remember, it is not three weeks since I had him at my board."

"And yet I tell you, that my Lord Rawdon will retire to Europe, on the plea of ill health, as soon as he gets back to Charleston."

"Prophecy again, Willie."

"You will see. I know all their secrets. I have given you the true history. But, there can be no doubt, that Rawdon is in full retreat. Suppose, sir, that, within a week, you hear this news confirmed by other authorities—will you then retire to the hills of Santee? I do not ask you to believe me, though you surely know that I could never deceive you. But if other proofs reach you, sir, will you not then see and feel the necessity of putting my sisters and yourself in a place of safety?"

"But what will my flight—for such it will be—what will it argue to my Lord Rawdon?"

"Nothing more than a common prudence—having reference to the safety of women and children. Lord Rawdon knows your loyalty—knows that, in your situation, you can not be a combatant. Nay, ask himself, and he will tell you, put these girl-children out of the way of the two opposing armies."

After a pause the old man said:—

"I will think of it, Willie. I will think of it. But let us join Carrie."

At that moment, Carrie was heard singing in the piazza, and no doubt St. Julien was her companion—perhaps her only one. He had had an excellent opportunity. The old baron thought of this. He had another twinge, almost like one of the gout, as he recollected how long they had been left together. Little Peter was again put in requisition—and the veteran, chair and cushions, were wheeled from the supper-room into the parlor, and from parlor to piazza, where they certainly found St. St. Julien and Carrie alone together. Little Lottie, tired out, had been carried off to bed.

There was nothing suspicious in the appearance of the two who occupied the piazza on the appearance of father and son. They were not particularly near each other, and neither of them betrayed any confusion. But the old man still had twinges, and, what with the reflection that "the Frenchman" —as old Sinclair still persisted in calling St. Julien—had enjoyed a most excellent opportunity which he could scarcely, as an old soldier, be supposed to have neglected, and the startling and totally unexpected intelligence, as disagreeable as startling, which his son had revealed to him, the veteran was just as querulous as he could be within gentlemanly limits. St. Julien heard quietly the growlings of the senior, and said nothing. Willie Sinclair was as playful as if neither war, nor rebellion, nor treachery, were in the land, and Carrie laughed as light-heartedly at his badinage as if her lover were not sitting within six feet of her.

"The worst of your gout, my dear father," said Willie—'and I suppose it is the case with other gouty persons—is that you not only feel pain, but that you do not sympathize with pleasure. Now, sir, sitting here in the delicious balmy softness of this breeze, with the moon just rising over that pine forest, everything so calm, so soft, so delicious, it is wonderful that anything—care, pain, fear, doubt, apprehension—should leave us totally insensible of the prospect—the scene—the sweet serenity and heaven-like peace, over earth and heaven The heart ought to soften insensibly, the fancy become lively, the whole soul winged and rising in sympathy with the rich, pure, delicious nature, every pulse of which just now seems to respond in exquisite harmony. Who thinks of strife now—who remembers the past conflict, or the past danger? It seems sinful, indeed, that we should not forget. "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof;" and let the Future bring its own mission of mischief, without sending expresses to bring in the intelligence."

And, sooth to say, the scene was very sweet and beautiful—so calm, so serene; the pines slumbered, or only murmured to the zephyr—the moon, meanwhile, hallowed all their tops with the softest effulgence—in the blue heavens, large masses of white, creamy clouds floated away slowly from the approaching

orb of night,—but not so fast, but that they momently put on fresh robes of silver, and grew themselves to glories as they swept away with their long trailing garments of softest lustre. Down the long dark avenue, the few fires kept up by the dragoons, grew gradually dim, in the increasing light of the moon, which covered the shadowy foliage with its own brightness, and now began to scatter a thousand droplets, which, falling through the thick evergreen tops, lay upon earth like so many bright pearls imploring to be gathered. Hardly a sound was heard to break the delicious serenity of the scene; save now and then a murmur from the remoter part of the encampment, where groups of the dragoons kept wakeful in merry chat or song, beguiling their watch as they could with the small resources of a volunteer soldiery. Occasionally, the faint cries of a hound in the forest, hunting *con amore*, or crying for a lost master, added to the picturesque sweetness of the night.

"Let no one disparage our plain country, as wanting in scenic beauty," said Willie Sinclair, "when we possess such blue skies, such delicious moonlight, such vast plains of verdure, tree striving with tree for the embrace with light and air; such a wilderness of shrub and flower; shrubs that give out odor as you crush them, flowers that woo your every step with bloom and beauty as you go, and birds that sing in clouds, with a gush of voices that tell only of summer buds and blossoms, and summer fancies. Ah, Carrie, shall the time ever come when there shall cease to be a glory for our eyes in yonder moon—when the bloom shall pass away from the forest, and the perfume from the flower, and we shall only pursue our way among walks of winter, our feet among the dead, to find the vista ending only in a cheerless grave?"

"A sad thought! and this is not the season for sad thoughts, Willie. You are here to-day and gone to-morrow. Do not sadden our moments now, by gloomy fancies."

"I will not! Come! I will be generous. You have not heard me sing for a long time, and I have a new song, made by our partisan troubadour, gallant George Dennison."

"What! have you a poet too among your rapscallions?" demanded the veteran colonel.

"Ay, sir, and it is perhaps an argument in favor of our cause

that we can boast so good a poet as George Dennison, since the poets have been always patriots."

"If so, Willie, your cause is lost: for our army boasts of Major André and Henry Barry," quoth the colonel.

"Say nothing of poor André, father," said Carrie Sinclair.

"No! no! And the less said of Harry Barry as a poet, perhaps the better. I should be sorry to do so much wrong to Dennison's muse as to subject her to a comparison with that of the little major. But you shall hear how our own Georgie sings. He makes his own music, by the way, as well as the words, and is an improvisatore. The song which I now give you was struck off at a heat, one night, over the supper-table of Captain Porgy, while we lay on the Great Pedee. We had Colonels Maham and Singleton at supper, and half a score besides. I admit that the poet's inspiration did not come till supper was quite over, and the Jamaica in free circulation."

"Well, leave off the long preface and begin," said the baron. "I confess, Willie, I not only wish to hear you sing once more, but I am curious to see what sort of a poet you keep in your rebel tents."

Willie Sinclair tried and tuned the guitar in a few moments, then sang the following lyric in a fine, powerful voice, and with considerable taste and spirit:—

1.

"My country is my mistress,
And in her beauties rare,
I read the sweetest hist'ries
That make a loved one dear:
Her charms invite to glory,
They won the brave of yore,
And linked with gallant story
Shall win for evermore.
My heart, my heart, dear mistress,
My heart is at thy feet!

2.

"Do foemen gaze upon thee,
With eager thirst to spoil,
To wrest thy glory from thee,
And trample on thy soil?
Ho! let me hear thy summons,

But lift thy spear and cry,
'Let him who loves his country,
Protect her rights or die!'—
My sword, my sword, dear mistress,
My sword is at thy feet!

3.

"I'm but a forest ranger,
With cloak and cap awry,
But, in the hour of danger,
I'll do for thee or die;
The charms that won our sires,
Are fresh and sweet to me,
As when, through hostile fires,
Their brave souls set thee free!
My life, my life, dear mistress,
My life is at thy feet!"

"And it is such stuff as this that satisfies your patriotism, is it? It is worthy of the Jamaica which inspired it. Why, Willie, it has not even the merit of decent rhyme. How do you make 'from thee' and 'upon thee' correspond? And what a gross license is taken in making 'mistress' and 'hist'ries' rhyme! Shocking! The fellow must be an Irishman, I fancy."

"He is of the stock, at all events. But you must not be too exacting about the rhymes in a song, where much liberty is usually allowed. Have you seen the poems of the new Scotch poet, a lad named Burns, a mere peasant, who is astonishing the British people by his native melodies? Dennison has several of them, and they are very sweet and simple, and withal very touching, but the verses are just as rude, and free and easy, as those of Dennison; not a whit better in respect to rhyme; but that does not materially hurt them for singing, and a little rudeness may be always permitted where the measure is correct, and where the sentiment is good. Besides, this of Dennison was an absolute outgushing at the moment—an improvisation—and I hold it to be a wonderful proof of the spontaneous merit of the minstrel."

"Pooh! pooh! there is no such thing as improvising English poetry. I have no doubt he made it by dint of repeated hammering in his private workshop, and his chief merit is in memo-

rizing it well. They say that Sheridan does the same thing in his epigrams and speeches. But I have had enough of your backwoods genius. British poetry is good enough for me, and will serve our purposes for the next hundred years. I must go to bed. Mr. St. Julien, you take a bed with us of course, and we shall see you in the morning."

"No, sir! I am obliged to you, but I must not indulge in any such luxury now. I will share the night with my dragoons. I am sorry to add, sir, that we shall ride at dawn."

"Well, sir, be at home here while you stay. Your friend will do the honors. Good night, sir. Willie, you will see me before you retire?"

"Yes, sir: I will help you now to your chamber."

"No! no! Little Peter is better able to do that. He knows just how to manage it. Carrie, my child."

She flew to him, and kissed him fondly.

"I will visit you when Willie does, father."

"Very good; only do not be too late."

When the old man had retired, Willie Sinclair proposed a walk to his sister and St. Julien, through the encampment of the dragoons, who skirted the avenue in groups, their horses all being tethered to the trees on the lower side. As they appeared, the bugler of the corps, a fellow of no small merit in his department, stealing off to the end of the avenue, welcomed them with a plaintive German air, the long-drawn melancholy notes of which chimed harmoniously with the hour and the scene. By the failing camp-fires and the slowly-rising moon, the picturesque of the bivouac was greatly enlivened and increased.

"What a glorious sight must an encampment of a great army be," exclaimed Carrie, "an army, such as they see in Europe twenty or thirty thousand men, gayly caparisoned, helmets of polished steel, plumes flaunting in air, silken and gorgeous banners, and glittering harness."

"Yes, indeed, Carrie; a magnificent spectacle. We can show you no such sight in Carolina. But a dragoon charge through an open pine wood, Carrie, is a sight also worth seeing."

"She may see something of the shock of armies here before

long," was the remark of St. Julien. "I hope, Sinclair that you persuaded your father to remove to the Hills."

"I tried to do it. I gave him all the reasons I could for it; and you, Carrie, must follow up the counsel when I am gone. Better, indeed, that you should affect a degree of apprehension that you may not feel, so that you attain this object."

"But is there really any danger of this?" asked the damsel in lower tones.

"Yes! nothing can be more probable. Within ten days the two armies may cross bayonets on these very plains. I shall urge upon him the removal of the family again to-night; but I fear with no success. My father is not easily to be persuaded that the British army is not fully able to give him security in his own homestead; and to every argument which I offer he opposes their invincibility. He supposes that all I say is the result only of our presumptuous hopes and still more presumptuous conceit. But here comes Little Peter, St. Julien, bringing out a jug of Jamaica which I ordered for the use of your troop. Have it shared among them, and then we will prepare for sleep. I need more than I get; and the two hours that I enjoyed on your bed this morning, Carrie, have only increased my appetite for half a dozen more to-night."

Little Peter now appeared. The jug of Jamaica was distributed among the eager dragoons; and, while St. Julien escorted Carrie toward the dwelling—an opportunity for the lovers' leave-taking thus accorded, which we are sure was not unprofitably employed—Sinclair found his way among the dragoons, shaking hands with their best men, and showing himself familiarly to all. The troop had been raised by himself, and he knew the way to make himself popular with them. When he rejoined his sister and St. Julien, they were again in the piazza, the latter being ready to depart. The two separated in silence; but there was a speech in the final squeeze of the hand which he gave her, which had in it far more eloquence than any words of tenderness.

St. Julien strolled out slowly to join his dragoons, while Willie and his sister proceeded together to the chamber of the father. It is needless that we follow them thither. We can well conceive, by what we already know of the parties, the sort

of conversation that took place between them. Of course, Willie reurged the removal of the family to the hills of Santee.

"No, no, Willie! If I go anywhere, I retire to the city! If rebellion is to be triumphant, this country is no place for me!"

"You will think better of it. Our triumph involves no forfeiture of those securities of law and liberty which make a country precious to a people."

"It does! it does! Once break down the barrier of rightful authority, and there is an end to all security—all right—all liberty! Then rapine and appetite will rage like wolves throughout the land! But I will consider your suggestion. It will be time enough when the two armies approach the neighborhood, to determine. We shall have sufficient premonition of the approach of the danger."

"I am not so sure of that, sir; but I can say no more. Only, sir, let me entreat that you be governed in what you do, by the single consideration of what is due to the safety of the girls."

"Surely, Willie, surely! I think of them only."

And they wrung each other's hands and parted, Carrie accompanying Willie to his apartments. They could hear a deep sigh from the father's chamber after they had left it. Poor old man! He had many foes to his own happiness to encounter in his own prejudices. Such is always the danger, where a strong will, tortured by conventional laws, is desirous of subduing the most natural of human instincts. What to him were the fancied rights of the German monarch of Great Britain, weighed against the claims of his own children, and the sympathies with his native soil? Nothing, really; but very serious obstacles, indeed, when we consider the training, the teaching, and the whole experience of his early life. It it this very sort of despotism, that of convention and experience, however valuable in a thousand respects, which make it so difficult for men, who have passed the middle period of life, to learn or to appreciate the new truth—the inevitable necessity of progress. It is not that they can not learn; it is because the task is so much harder to unlearn! And old men rarely love to clear new lands;—they prefer to manure the old.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SCOUT AGAINST SCOUT—TAKING TRAIL.

BETWEEN brother and sister, so really kindred and truly affectionate as Willie and Carrie Sinclair, we may readily conceive that the parting was as difficult as it was tender. But it was at last effected, and Willie laid himself down to slumber. He needed sleep and felt weariness, and was just dropping into that dreamy condition of mind, which promises a sleep equally serene and refreshing, when he heard a door open below, a rustling in the passage to his chamber, and then the chamber-door itself, as it turned with a creak upon its hinges. He raised himself up at the moment, and in another second he found 'Bram at his side, fresh from that famous castle in the "Four-Hole Swamp," where we had the pleasure first to introduce the stalwart and faithful slave to the knowledge of our readers.

"Ha, 'Bram! You are late! All right?"

"All right as he kin be, Mass Willie. I bin keep late, you see, sence dat fellow, Jim Ballou, bin git drunk on de road. He hab bottle in he pocket, Mass Willie, and nebber 'top drink tell he finish 'em; all he se'f, 'cepting one sup he gee to me."

"And where's Ballou now?"

"He's down stairs; he da wait for you to call 'em. I no bring 'em up, for 'stirb you in you sleeping, and mek' noise, wid he cowbelly shoes; and besides he ain't quite git over he drunk yit."

"Did he bring in any papers?"

"Yes, he git 'em! I wants 'em to gee me; I fear'd he will loss 'em; but he say, 'No truss 'em to you, nigger.' No truss 'em to me! an' he so drunk all day, he kain't truss hese'f."

"Bring him up here, 'Bram."

Jim Ballou made his appearance a few moments after. He was a well-made, large, vigorous fellow, with an ingenuous, open countenance, frank and fair, but now flushed with the signs of frequent intemperance. He was now only half sober

and just drunk in that degree which leaves one in full persuasion of his own entire competence and importance. Like most persons of sanguine temperament, possessed of strength and courage — and, we may add, conscious of his own fidelity — he was apt to be a little impudent when under the influence of liquor. His first entrance into the chamber would have satisfied Willie Sinclair of his condition, without rendering necessary the report of the slave, which was also entirely to be relied on. Sinclair, accordingly, received him with great gravity, sitting on the side of the bed.

"Have you brought the papers, Ballou?"

"That I have, major; they're all safe; but I've had work, riding and fasting," giving the papers as he spoke.

"And drinking, Ballou?"

"Yes, indeed, major, you may say that. If 'twan't for a sup or two, now and then, at the bottle, a poor fellow would break down in the hard riding I've got to do."

"You seem to suffer from it, Ballou; and I am to suppose you do, since you complain of it."

"Oh, deuce take the complaint, major! I'm not given to complainings, though the work is mighty hard I have to do. Yet, I gits on; and, as I takes a breeze now and then, I contrives to keep up. I'm good for a frolic, major, whenever there's a chaince."

The major only gave the scout a glance of the eye, and then proceeded to examine the papers which he brought. This he did with earnestness and deliberation. Meanwhile, Ballou strode across the chamber, with a whistle, picked up and examined the alabaster ornaments upon the mantlepiece, upset a vase of flowers, awkwardly replaced them, still whistling, rolled over to the window, and stretched his head out for the enjoyment of the moonlight. Sinclair followed him for a moment with his eye.

"Ballou!" he called.

"Yes, major! Here we are. Are them papers all right, major?"

"Right! You saw General Marion?"

"Yes, sir, the 'Fox' is right and lively. He gin me a full half-hour's talk."

"I hope you were sober, sir, while he did so."

"As a judge, sir! Oh! yes—couldn't be otherwise, sir; at that time hadn't drank a thimbleful of the element. Saw the Fox, sir, as I say, and we talked a while; saw Colonel Maham too, sir—had a talk with him. Colonel Singleton had something to say, sir—not much, but he's a gentleman, sir—what he had to say was very sensible, and quite elegant. But didn't get the first nip of the element from either of the gentlemen."

"And where are they now, Ballou?"

"Well, sir, taking all things into 'count—what they said, and what I suppose they had to do—they are now opposite to Cave Hall. They talked of pushing upward, off-hand, sir, and with a breezy spur. Colonel Singleton told me to tell you that the boats would be ready at your landing to-morrow, and that you must not delay them."

"Did you have to go down to Nelson's?"

"Yes, major. That was a devil of a ride—a day of it—and a mighty lean supper to sleep upon."

"Any report from that quarter, sir?"

'All quiet, I believe, sir?" I got from some niggers that there had been a small party of tory gentlemen at Wantoot, a day or two ago, but they went off to the South somewhere."

The answers were given with tolerable clearness. There was some rambling talk on the part of the scout—for such was Jim Ballou, and one of the best in the service, when sober—but we have condensed the substance of his replies into the briefest language. This rambling of the speaker, with a little too much of the dashing in his tones and manner, which Sinclair thought quite too familiar and obtrusive, were now to find their commentary.

"Ballou, you have been drinking."

"No denying the insinuation, major. It's my little infirmity, sir. But, drunk or sober, I know my duty, sir, and I do it, sir—I do it."

"You may think so, Ballou, but you will find few persons of the same opinion. I certainly can not trust a man, whom, at any moment, a bottle of rum or whiskey may seduce—who, no matter what the business in hand, the peril to himself or others, the importance of his trusts, or the necessity of having all his

wits about him, forgets all in the most miserable and beastly temptations!"

"Severe, major—rather. Severe, I may say! I'm a sinner, in that way, sir, I admit—but I never neglect my duty, major!—never!"

"I do not know that!—I do not believe it! No man who puts it out of his own power to control his physical and mental energies, and to use them at a moment's warning, but must, some time or other, neglect his duties! I *know* that you have neglected yours! You should have met me last evening at 'Bram's castle."

"I tried, sir, but I couldn't. The thing was decidedly impossible, major—not to be done—not to be done! Couldn't do it—couldn't!"

"Not so, sir—you could! You were drinking yesterday as well as to-day. More, sir, your indiscretion *has* done mischief! You have suffered yourself to be seen—nay, followed, into the swamp—so that Hell-fire Dick, and some of his gang, are possessed of all the clues to that place of refuge."

The fellow was startled and humbled. His tones and manner changed. He grew quite sober on the instant. He knew—none better—how important to the party was the secret of their hiding-places

"Oh! Major Willie, tell me, it ain't so. You're just trying to scare me—that you are—to scare me—"

"It is so, Ballou, and we are no longer secure in a refuge which would have been particularly important at this juncture, if the knowledge had been confined to ourselves. Look at that paper. I took it this day from the pocket of Hell-fire Dick!"

"What! you had *him* in your hands?—Devil Dick in your hands?"

"Read the paper."

The scout read and struck his head with his hands.

"It's true, sir! It's true! I've been a fool and a beast, sir It's clear that Hell-fire Dick followed me to the swamp. But you have him—you have hung him, sir—he was outlawed, you know. You hung him of course—heels free—head on one side—you hung him!"

"He has escaped! and no doubt remembers the rope to the

castle, just as well without this memorandum as with it. Nay, more: he had with him a party of four others, all of whom are probably possessed of the same secret."

"Who are they, sir?" asked the scout quickly.

"Sam Brydone—"

"Ah! Skin-the-Serpent, as they calls him."

"Ralph Brunson—"

"He's the 'Trailer,' and a mighty good scout, but a great rascal. And, sir—he gets drunk too."

"Does that improve his quality as a scout?"

"Oh! no, sir; but, may be, it will give me a better chance at him!"

The scout did not see how fatal was the admission that he thus made. Sinclair quietly remarked—

"And he, possibly, congratulates himself upon the advantage which a like habit in you will afford to him. Drunkenness, you see, is no merit in a scout."

"I'm afraid, sir, that's a true notion—a true notion."

"The other fellows were Joe Best and Pete Blodgit."

"What sir—*our* Pete!"

"Yes: Best will not trouble us. He was hung, yesterday, by the dragoons, as an outlaw, after being severely wounded. Blodgit is a person to be watched rather than feared. There may be others to whom Hell-fire Dick has imparted his discovery; but two of those I have mentioned were probably with him when he made it. They were with him just afterward. And now, sir, you see what is due to your drunkenness. For this offence I will not punish you, but I can no longer trust you, Ballou."

"Oh! sir—major—you call that no punishment—no punishment—to me, sir, Jim Ballou—to me!"

"It was the penalty, well known to you, of such an offence as yours, yet you have not feared it, Ballou. I am unwilling to risk being placed in a relation with you in which I may *have* to punish you; for I can not forget that we have known each other in boyhood; and I prefer to dismiss you from my service."

"Dismiss me from your service—me, Jim Ballou! Oh! no! major, you can't do that. I can't be dismissed. I'm your man,

sir—by all that's affectionate and interesting, major—I'm your man. Can't be dismissed, sir—stick to you right and left, for'ad and backward, sir—just like your right hand, sir—like your dog, sir—like your nigger, major—like your nigger."

"No, Ballou; we must part."

"Psho, major—but you must be jesting. It's unpleasant jesting, sir, between old friends, Dismiss me! God bless me! What a notion—all a notion, sir. Why, Willie Sinclair, 'twas Jim Ballou that first taught you to cross a horse."

"I'm sorry, Ballou—sorry enough—but I can't trust you any more."

"What! and only for a little familiarity with the jug—jug! with the jug—an innocent jug—a bottle, sir, not a jug. Jugs of Jamaica are not to be had every day. A mere innocent familiarity with a bottle—a black bottle of Jamaica. No, no! Major Willie, you can't do it. The thing won't be done. Dismiss me from your service! I won't swear, major, but I'll take a celestial oath upon it, that the thing can't be done—won't be done, sir—won't suffer itself to be done."

"It must be done." More seriously.

"And only for that little familiarity with the bottle. Why, major, the bottle rather helps my ability. It does, sir. A touch of the element, sir, always gives me a sort of life to be up and doing, just as if I had a pair of wings, sir—makes me fly, sir, makes me fly."

"You shall fly no more for me, Ballou, under its inspirations."

"Come, come, major! stop that now. It makes me feel uneasy, sir—it does. I know, sir, that I'm a fool, sir—easy to be persuaded, sir, when the liquor speaks; but what then? Aint I here—aint the papers, there—aint the duty done."

"Yes! and as I have shown you, it is sometimes overdone; and I owe it to the cause in which I am engaged, to peril none of its secrets in the hands of a man who can not resist the miserable temptation of the bottle. I am sorry to part with you, Ballou; no one better knows your ability than I do;—and I know you to be a true friend of your country;—more, sir, I have loved you as one associated with all my childish sports and exercises, but we must part. You can take service in the

brigade, as scout or soldier, but I can give you no more special trusts."

"Oh! Willie Sinclair! Are you serious now?" and the fellow's voice trembled.

"I am, Ballou—as serious as I ever was in all my life. Serious and sorry! Sorry to lose you—sorry for yourself. Sorry that one of our best scouts should be lost to our service, where he might serve us best if he would."

The tears gushed from the fellow's eyes, and he fell upon his knees in great agitation. His voice was husky with emotion, as he cried:—

"Pardon me this once, major—Willie Sinclair—pardon me this once, and I will swear. Only hear me swear—'Lord God have mercy and give me strength as I swear by my eternal safety, never, of my free will, to taste another drop of the infernal liquor!'—There, major—there!"

"An awful oath, Ballou. Rise up, my poor fellow."

"It's made, Major Willie. It's made. Oh! Major Willie, won't you trust me now?"

"God forbid that I should discourage your efforts for self-recovery. I *will* trust you, Ballou—see that you do not forget your vow."

"God help and strengthen me to keep it! and I will keep it, Willie Sinclair—as a man that calls upon God to look and watch his proceedings. I'm a man, and strong enough for that, or I'm carrion, and only fit for the buzzards."

"It is a solemn covenant, Ballou, that you have made with God—"

"And you! I know—I mean it to be solemn! I love liquor, and I've been easy to be led off by the temptation. But I've sworn! and now, major, try me. Set me at work—try me with a hard service;—I want to be up and doing."

"Conquer yourself, Ballou, and I will take you to my heart for ever. You are a noble and faithful fellow, and only free yourself from this dangerous habit, and you are worthy of any man's friendship. Rise, my friend, rise. Believe me, I felt as much pain at the thought of parting with you, as I ever felt on any occasion in my life."

The fellow rose from the floor, brushed the tears hastily from his eyes, and sobbed:—

"Try me again, major—try me, Willie Sinclair—and let me make myself respectable again. I want to be at work!"

"You must go now, Ballou, and snatch a few hours of sleep. Rest yourself at all events, as well as you can. With the morning you shall have work—the very sort that you require."

"What is it, major? Tell me now that I may think over it to-night. I do all my thinking at night when I'm a-bed—I do."

"It is to take the trail of Devil Dick, and his companions, the Trailer and the Serpent. They are, no doubt, all herded together in the Santee swamp; and too near us to suffer us to sleep quietly. Our dragoons may rout them out to-morrow, as they have work to do in that quarter—in the very neighborhood, probably, where they all harbor. Our men will hardly find them, as they will have something better to do than to seek them. They will skulk rather than fly, for I feel sure that their aim is the sacking of the Barony. They know the range as well as you and I, and will hang about us, and lie snug till we are off. Then they will probably up and follow; take the road after us, or make a second attempt on the Barony. Now, do you see what is the work which you might make profitable?"

"I think I do! I do!"

"We must try and cut off these rascals, if we can do so without turning directly upon them. It is the work of a scout, rather than of a regiment. But it is not so essential to cut them off, as to cover ourselves. Ballou, I feel that I can trust your honor and fidelity, much more than I can your strength and sobriety. I wish you to cover me. To-morrow, I separate from the dragoons. I go alone, in disguise, within the precincts of an enemy's post."

"You're not going to Orangeburg, major, are you?"

"I am—there and the neighborhood."

"Do you know that Inglehardt is certainly there; and he is about as cold, as cunning, and as venomous as a snake in August."

"I know all that! Know him well. But is his command there?"

"That I don't learn. But he was seen there only three days ago."

"But his mere presence does not make the place a British post."

"No, sir; but it is pretty much under British influence."

"I know that too; know exactly what I have to fear, and upon whom I may rely; and I have reason to believe that you are right when you report Inglehardt to be there or in the neighborhood. But the visit must be made. I have much to do there, and must see the commissary Travis."

"Don't trust *him*, major. Didn't 'Bram tell you? He's another snake—a snake!"

"I know more than 'Bram does, and I know Travis. Enough! The matter that I wish you to see to is this:—these outlaws are, no doubt, so harbored in the swamp that, as we can not seek for and push them, they will be able to see all our operations. Now, I must separate from the dragoons. These outlaws may detect the movement or not. If they do, seeing me alone, and in disguise, they will be apt to follow, just as the dogs take after the wounded buck, letting the herd run as they please. I shall have the start of them, but as I shall ride at my leisure, and have occasion to stop here and there, they can readily overhaul me, and my notion is—"

"Ah! I see, sir,—you wish me to take your trail also—your trail?"

"Exactly! 'Bram will have a similar duty; both of you will be armed. Where one fails to make a *point*, the other may be more successful; you can operate together, and both with me, in any event which needs our united strength; and finally, after you have safely covered me to Orangeburg, you will get a *dug-out*, and keep it hidden in the river swamp just below the landing at Holly-Dale."

"Travis's place, in the Fork?"

"Yes!—Now, Jim Ballou, you see the duty that requires to be done, and can readily determine for yourself how it should be done. I can teach you nothing as a scout. 'Bram is also good at the business. Have an understanding with him to-night, but, of course, you will work on separate tracks. Prescribe your plan, and he will follow it. I leave the procedure wholly to

your discretion, having shown you what is to be feared and from whom. I must say to you, however, that 'Hell-fire Dick' has got an increase of force, and may now number four or five, instead of two or three. But these fellows rarely keep all together, long. The division of the plunder commonly scatters them. Remember, however, should you succeed in surprising them, and destroying them, of course, you are still to pursue my track. There may be many such parties on the route, and I shall want you above. One of my scouts reports a small gang of seven, led by Cooper, the fellow who was supposed to have been left for dead by *our* Travis and Duesto, yet got off to the enemy though handcuffed to a dead man."

"I know! I know! Pendarvis was killed outright. I remember all about it — all! — and a bolder and blacker villain than Cooper don't trouble the country — Don't!"

"He has been seen within eight days again upon the Belleville road, as leader of a party of six. He had with him two of the Claytons of St. Mathew's — a little red-headed fellow, named Jones, and one Paul Sturner. A week before that his party was twice the number, and he was nearly run down by Captain Rumph's squad. Lieutenant Wannamaker was so close as to make a cut at him and wound the quarters of his horse. But he got off with the loss of two of his party, who were cut down by the troopers. He is a scoundrel of wonderful energies and endurance, and I have reason to think would be especially pleased to find me in his meshes. At all events, there will be enough to tax all your vigilance, even if you succeed in throwing out or destroying this Hell-fire Dick and his party. Am I fully understood, Ballou?"

"Yes, Major Willie — and you will fully trust me? You will!"

"I will! Bring up 'Bram that I may give him his lesson in your presence."

We need not pursue this conference further. Enough that all the parties received their instructions, and retired for the night. At dawn, the grounds were empty — Willie Sinclair, Peyre St. Julien, the dragoons — all were gone; but the wakeful eyes of Carrie Sinclair had witnessed their departure, and her waving hands and murmured prayer had blessed their progress.

What was that progress? We must report it briefly. It was to carry off all the cattle, stock of every kind, grain and forage, that could be gleaned from the plantations along the Santee in this particular precinct. The boats of Marion were waiting—from morning to night the dragoons were busy; and corn and fodder, and cattle, which had been hitherto left to the doubtful charge of Master Pete Blodgit, were withdrawn from his to a safer keeping. Blodgit, himself, kept out of the way in the woods, while Sinclair and the dragoons were on the place. He had found a hiding-place with the outlaws, leaving his mother to propitiate the anger of their late patron. She whined at him for pity, and his mercy allowed her to remain in the cottage, the shelter of which her criminal hypocrisy had so completely forfeited. It was at sunset, and when the day's work was nearly done, that Sinclair and St. Julien met in conference. A harsher duty awaited the latter and found him reluctant.

"You are now, Peyre, to carry off all the stock, except brood-hogs, and cows with calves, from the Sinclair Barony."

"How, Willie, can I do that?"

"It must be done, Peyre; you can not distinguish between whigs and loyalists, and favor the latter. It must be done. We must leave neither hair nor hide to the enemy. But you need not be seen in the business. I have prepared Benny Bowlegs, the driver, for what he has to expect and to do, and he is ready to father the offence upon the tories. You will, however, give him an acknowledgment of what you take, and he will convey it to my sister. Your paper will establish a claim upon government, should it ever reach security and permanence. One more matter. I fear for the safety of the Barony. You will leave a corporal's guard on the place—known only to Benny—in close shelter in the swamp. He will provision it. Instruct your officer to be ready at call, to defend or protect the family from these maranders. They will hardly need to stay a week. With the rest of your command, this duty done—and that should be in two days more—then, giving a wide berth to Orangeburg, sweep up by Rumph's at Turkey hill, and cross the North Edisto at Shilling's; put yourself in the thickets by Bull-fight pond, and wait my message, either by Ballou or 'Bram. Of course, you will have your scouts

busy, and watchful, down even to the bridge at Orangeburg It is possible that I may have some trouble, as I have certainly some risks at Orangeburg and the neighborhood, for my time will be divided between Travis's plantation and the village. Above all, have two or three expert fellows for ever with an eye on Travis's. If Inglehardt be about, the utmost vigilance is necessary."

Fully understanding each other, the major parted with his friend at nightfall. He went along, still in the disguise of a backwoodsman, and with hair and beard not his own. His pistols were at hand, and he wore a plain basket-hilted cut-and-thrust at his side — a weapon in the use of which he excelled — having taken lessons from the Italian, Baldacheszo, who, a little while before the war, had been a famous teacher of the young gentry of the Carolinas. Sinclair sped away with confidence and with seeming security; and so, at the same time, did St. Julian with his troop, pushing down to the river some six miles off, where one party crossed with the boats and forage, and the other bivouacked in the swamp.

Night had fallen. The woods were silent. For three miles from the cottage of Bledgit, on either hand, they showed no signs of life for several hours. But there was life, nevertheless, human life, wakeful, watchful, and close harboring within the immediate precincts of the cottage. Bledgit, we may mention, had not shown himself to any one of the foragers; and, this, perhaps, had tended somewhat to make his mother's plea to Sinclair successful. He had left the Barony with the full purpose of expelling the wretched old woman, taking from her the negro-girl whom his sister had lent her, and burning the hovel to the ground. But he had relented in his sterner purpose, as he beheld the miserable condition of the beldam. Her real poverty and wretchedness saved her from the proper punishment of her guilt. He gave her fifty bushels of corn for her own support, leaving it to her son, who had the fruitful abilities of the rogue, to provide her with the bacon which he knew he could always find. He left nothing for *him*, and unless he used the corn allotted for his mother, there was no provision made for his own horse or any other.

But after a few hours had elapsed from the departure of the

troopers, the senses of both Ballou and 'Bram, closely harbored in concealing thickets, though apart, within a quarter of a mile of the cottage, were saluted with the faint blasts of a common horn. They pricked up their ears as they heard, and each prepared, after the manner of the scout, to make himself acquainted with the source of signal. Ballou was now on his good behavior. A double duty was in fact before him. He was to approve himself capable of abstinence, a virtue which he had not before affected; and to exercise his best *scouting* capacities, for which his credit was already great. Except Jack Bannister of the Congarees, a noble yeoman of the whig side, and one Watson Gray, a tory, Jim Ballou was the most famous scout of all the Santee region. That any exception could be made, in conferring this rank upon him, had been due to his former sottishness. He was now to recover ground, and reassert his superior merits. He determined, accordingly, to employ all his energies, and not mistake a single point in the game. The first step, he felt when he heard the horn and the replies to it, which followed shortly after, had been successfully taken. All the sounds that reached him were from below—*none were from the rear*—no enemy lay behind him, and he could thus advance in security. *To feel his way safely forward*, is the great necessity for a scout. This he can only do when assured that he is not followed. His game is to take the trail after others; and, lying *perdu*, Ballou waited for other signals.

These were soon repeated, and this time from the direction of Blodgit's cottage. They were answered more distinctly from below—three several blasts. Between the woods which he and 'Bram occupied, and those whence the signals came, there ran a broad wagon-trace down to the river's landing. This trace intersected the main road within a few yards of the spot where the cottage stood. A third blast, more lively and thrice repeated, from this latter precinct, called for further replies, which Ballou was pleased to perceive were much nearer at hand. He felt that he should soon be enabled to pick his way out, and, perhaps, be permitted to see, himself unseen, the parties who found it thus necessary to commune together. Let us approach the place of meeting also.

Among the oaks directly in front of his cottage, stood Pete

Blodgit, waiting for the outlaws whom he had summoned. They had helped to ruin him; he owed them no love; but he was a wretched dependant upon others for protection, and he had cut himself off from better associates. With the exception of the small amount in Spanish milled dollars, which he had succeeded in withholding from Willie Sinclair, at their late settlement, and which his mother held with the tenacious fingers of avarice, he had not a single sixpence. The means of farther gains, from the same source, had been swept away that day by the foragers—he had seen the whole procedure from a familiar place of concealment; and Dick of Tophet, his ally, had torn away his horse with violence. He was in no mood to love those who had thus caused him to lose, and had besides robbed him; but he had no alternative. Cut off from the succor of the good, the weak who are also vicious have no refuge but with the wicked! The milk of Blodgit's bosom was soured and embittered; but his blood was too feeble in its rush to suffer him to show the hate and vexation which he felt. He had—to use his own expressive phraseology—"to grin and bear it!"

He was not long alone, being soon joined by the Trailer, Ralph Brunson. *His nom de guerre*, we may remark, was due also to his good reputation as a scout. He was considered a sure trailer, though held to be somewhat slow. The qualities of men and dogs are graduated and qualified in like manner. The Trailer came on foot, as did the others subsequently. They had hidden their horses in the woods.

"Nobody yit up but me, Pete?"

"You're the first. But I reckon it's the Sarpent that will be next. He was more up upon the hill. The farthest horn must ha' been Devil Dick's."

"Yes, and he'll git here slow; for his scalds ain't any the better for his hard run to-day."

"I'm afear'd he's a'most knocked up my critter."

"Well, you needn't care about that, sence thyars no chaince that you'll ever git her agin, onless Dick happens to see that he kin cross a better. He won't keep your'n a bit longer than that."

"It's mighty hard that I should lose my critter, and me a lame pusson too.'

"Oh! Lord, ef that was the only hardship that one had to grin under, the world would be a comfortable one enough for a poor man. But I reckon Sinclair's carried off everything from you; I cotched a sight or two of the transaction that made me jubous that you'd have nothing left better than acorns and pine-tops for man and beast."

"And you're right! He's swept off corn and fodder, hogs and cattle, everything he could carry, and whar the bread and meat is to come from the Lord only kin tell."

"It's mighty hard and cruel that a poor man should be robbed of all his airnings and support."

"And he a lame pusson too, and with a poor old sick mother, with the rheumatiz so bad that it would be a God's marcy ef she was safe in the ground."

"Yes, it's mighty hard, Pete. A poor man has no chaince with these rich harrystocrats, as Devil Dick calls 'em."

And the two very soon succeeded in persuading themselves, and one another, that the whole world was leagued in the cruel purpose to destroy them and starve them out, and rob them of their rights and all the bounties of earth and heaven. It is curious with what grateful logic the scoundrel will convince himself that he is a victim to the grossest wrongs on the part of the villanously virtuous. But the dialogue was at length arrested by the arrival of Brydone "the Serpent," and, after a while, Devil Dick himself appeared, accompanied by Jack Halliday, who was slightly wounded.

"Let's get in to your hole, Pete Blodgit," cried Dick of Tophet. "I'm a wanting help from the hands of your blessed mammy, who loves me as the devil loves the angel Gabriel. My back is all in a blister; and my ankles and wrists in a blaze. Lord! I could have wished almost that I had been hung up sooner than suffer from this fire all over. Come, open, Pete; I must git some salves and 'intments on my back, and I must have a shirt and jacket."

Dick ruled, and they entered the house together. They found Mother Blodgit, by the fire, rocking to and fro sulkily, and somewhat in the way. She was evidently not pleased with the turn which affairs had taken, though as yet she did not know the worst. Her little negro had reported the removal by

the dragoons, of all the corn, fodder, and stock. She had heard, too, a sharp and stern lesson from the lips of Sinclair, to which she could oppose no answer; and he had forborne to tell her all he knew. He had, however, shown her that he was aware of the Spanish dollars in her possession, but had concluded by bestowing them upon her;—a degree of generosity for which she professed herself thankful, though she cursed him in her heart while speaking. The poor, when vicious, are usually ungrateful; and a single boon withheld makes them forgetful of the thousand favors which have been previously bestowed upon them. But, as yet, she did not know that her son was horseless—that he had been robbed of his beast by the very outlaw who had helped to ruin him, and for whom he had done and sacrificed so much. Had she known, she would scarcely have found the desired ointments for the scorched back of Devil Dick—would scarcely have suffered her son to bestow upon the ruffian one of his best shirts and jackets. As it was, she suffered these sacrifices unwillingly; and brought forth her oils and ointments, without blessing or consecrating them lovingly to the work of healing. We need not detail the processes by which Dick of Tophet was rendered easier in the flesh, and habited anew in comfortable garments. The service was rendered after a fashion; and, cursing and crying alternately, as she saw the jug of Jamaica brought out from its covert, the old woman withdrew to her chamber, whence her grunts arose occasionally to relieve the monotony of the conversation, which took place among the outlaws.

Once more at ease, unpursued, and with strong drink before them, the goodly company began to go over the proceedings of the day. We, who know pretty much what these were, need not follow them in their commentary. We shall only note such portions of their dialogue as may be suggestive of the clues to such portions of this true history as are not yet in our hands.

"Well, they've carried off all your corn and fodder, hogs and cattle, Pete, and by this time they have 'em all across the river. The Sarpent tells me that Stuttering Peter [Horry] has been doing the same business below, as fur down as Nelson's. Now, the question is, what does this mean? To my thinking it means

that we're to have both armies down upon us in mighty little time."

"You think so, Dick?"

"I'm pretty sure of it. But I don't see what we're to lose by that, for there's always good pickings about the country, when the armies are a-coming together. Thar's always so many rich folks flying with their families, and leaving everything behind them. Now, I'm jest a-waiting to see old Sinclair drivin' off from that Bairony. He'll not be able to carry off everything, not by hafe, and ef I don't gut it, and gut him too, and his d—d eternal son, the major, at the first chaince; then there's no sense in calling me 'Hell-fire Dick' any longer."

"Well, how are we to do now?"

"Thar's nothing to be done, jest now, while Willie Sinclair's down at the Bairony, and with such a lot of dragoons."

"But them dragoons, I reckon, will cross the river, as soon as they've swept the plantations on this side. They're pretty quick at the work, and clean out a farm in mighty short order. 'Twon't be two days, I reckon, before they'll finish that job."

"Air we safe hyar *now*, where we air?" said Dick.

"I reckon," said the Trailer. "I trailed St. Julien and his dragoons down to the river. They've got off hafe of them, and t'other hafe has fires lighted, and are camped for the night. Some of them air in the boats. They're now a good six miles off, and mighty tired. But, look you, Willie Sinclair ain't with the dragoons."

"How! not with the dragoons? Why, how's that, when he's been with 'em all day, directing and giving orders, and pushing after men and boats, and working jest as hard as any."

"I know that; but he worn't with them when the dragoons marched down to the river, at sunset. I was in a '*harricane thick*,' on the butt eend of an almighty big tree, and safe kivered, and I could see every man as he filed down across the sandy run. Willie Sinclair worn't with 'em, I tell you."

"Then he's gone back to the Bairony! I wonder ef he took any of the dragoons with him?"

"I reckon not! I didn't count 'em, but I didn't miss any. Ef he took any, it couldn't be more than two or three. But I don't think he took any."

"Ef so, now would be the time to make a dash at the Bairony. They wouldn't look for us to-night."

"No? But after the work we've had, which of us is good for anything like a dash."

"Ah! Ef 'tworn't for this cussed scalding that I've got," groaned Dick of Tophet, writhing in his seat, "I'd show you how to make a dash. But you're right. Nothing's to be done to-night. We must git some sleep and some strength; and first for the strength, Blodgit, we must get some supper."

"I don't know whar you're to git it. I reckon thar's nothing better than dry meal in the house."

"Find something better, Pete, or we'll make a meal of *you*. Be stirring. I'm a famishing varmint."

Dick of Tophet was a person with whom Blodgit did not dare to trifle, and he proceeded in the search for something which would pacify the "varmint." At that moment the sounds of a horse's tread, at full gallop, were heard. It startled other ears than those of the outlaws, and Ballou and 'Bram, our two scouts, who had been peering with all their eyes through the logs of the cottage, were fain to steal off silently into the bushes, which they did in safety. A few moments after, the horseman thundered at the door. To the demand "Who's that?" the answer was prompt—"Eyes right!"—a pass-phrase evidently which had been previously agreed on. "It is Ben Nelson," said the Trailer, and the door was opened to the new-comer.

"Well, whar have *you* been, all this time, I wonder! We had a'most 'gin you up for lost."

"I wasn't lost, but took the road, which was pretty nigh to me, when the dragoons made the dash."

The account of the fellow, explaining his escape, was a confused one. It was felt to be so by the party.

"The fact is," said Devil Dick, "you got scared a little sooner, Ben Nelson, than anybody else. But the scare seems to have helped you to a safe road What hev you to report?"

"Why, nothing much."

"Whar did you hide?"

"Across the road, in a thick bay a leetle this side of the clay hill."

"I know the place."

"I fastened the horse in the hollow, and creeped out to the roadside when the sun was a-setting; but nothing was to be seed except one man in a common homespun hunting-shirt. He rode by, and he had an uncommon fine beast."

"Ha! what sort of beast?"

"Powerful, strong, and big, a most glorious black, black without a spot."

"Yes, a blaze on his right shoulder."

"Mout be! I couldn't see on that side, he guine up, and I on the left side of the road."

"It is Willie Sinclair, by the powers, and he goes alone! He's for the Bairony, or further on. We must see in the morning. I'm the man to take that scent! Now, look you, boys, here's the way the cat must jump. We must gut that Bairony. Now's the time, I reckon, when these fellows of St. Julien are crossing to t'other side, and before the two armies gits down. It's a bad sign for us, I'm a thinking, them two armies coming down. It's a sign that Lord Rawdon ain't able to hold his hand with Greene. We must be making our market while we kin. I'm for gutting that Bairony; but I'm for taking the trail of Willie Sinclair at all reeks. I owe him a knife," and Dick of Tophet displayed the carving-knife which he had caught up in his moment of flight. "Two or three of you, must scout day and night about the Bairony till you find the coast is clear—then put in and pull out. We'll be ready, I reckon, when the time comes. You, 'Skin-the-Serpent,' with Jack Halliday and Ben Nelson can take this business on your shoulders. The 'Trailer' and me will take after Willie Sinclair. I kin guess jist whar he's a guine. He's guine to sneak after old Travis's da'ter at Holly-Dale. He's been after her before. Ef 't ain't for that, what would he be in a disguise about?—in a homespun split shirt, and not in his uniform; and then with his great beard and whiskers which don't belong to his face at all. He's after that gal, mark what I'm a-saying."

"But what's it to us ef he is? What kin we git by taking trail of him?"

"I kin git my revenge out of his heart's blood!" answered Dick of Tophet fiercely; "but something more. What's he done with them hundred guineas that he tuk from poor Pete Blodgit? I reckon he's got hafe of 'em in his belt, and to'ther hafe he's left at the Bairony. So, you see, ef we plays out trumps, we stands a chaince, all of us, of picking up goulden stakes."

Dick the Devil, was apt to verify his proper claim to the title, by finally forcing his own will upon those with whom he associated. It was settled that, with the dawn, the party should divide, as he had indicated. The proceedings of both divisions were arranged at the sitting. It is needless to say that the ears of Ballou and 'Bram, drank in all the particulars of the arrangement, since the outlaws, apprehending no listeners, spoke in their ordinary tones of voice. Our scouts listened and watched to the last moment, when, after supping, and repeatedly drinking, the conspirators stretched themselves out upon the floor; satisfied that they were in no danger themselves, and with their horses hidden in the thicket. But hours had flitted by with noiseless rapidity before this was the case—the night was waning toward day—the moon was down—the stars wheeling more rapidly from sight. The cool breezes of the morning were beginning to sough and swell through the forest. Ballou and 'Bram, weary with the protracted watch of day and night, turned away from the hovel and slowly passed into cover. Not a word was spoken between them till they had left the cottage half a mile behind them. Then Ballou said:—

"'Bram, it's mighty hard that we should leave those scamps to a quiet sleep; but it's too late now to get down to the dragoons and bring any of them up; and I am scarcely able to lift one leg after another—scarcely—one after another."

"An' dis nigger ain't able to lift he body on he legs! I mus' hab res', Jim Ballou—I mus' hab my sleep."

"It's a good six miles to the river—then we'd have to hunt up the camp, for they hide close, and then—why 't would be broad daylight long before we could get back—broad daylight. 'Bram, one good common sense rule for a good scout is never to break down. We must let these fellows have their chance—let 'em have their chance."

"Da's jest wha' I was t'inking—let de dibbil hab he swing, tell we can jest put out han' and grab 'em."

"Ay, till we can make him swing—make him swing. But here I lie for the present. Let's have your bag, 'Bram, and see if we can't eat a little—only a little. That hambone has something on it still—something still!"

"Mighty close de knuckle, I tells you," answered 'Bram, bringing forth the remnants from their dinner.

"'Bram," said Ballou, eating vigorously, and speaking with a mouthfull—"to-morrow, by peep of day, you must go down to the camp, and let Captain St. Julien know what we heard about the attack on the Barony. He can trap those three fellows if he pleases—if he pleases;—and he does please, I'm pretty sure! Meanwhile, I'll take the trail after Devil Dick. You can take a short cut through the woods and join me above; I'll break a green bush and throw it, with the stem down the road, every now and then, so that you'll know whether I've passed or not—passed or not! You hear?"

"I yer."

"Very good! But to-night we must separate. Your horse is already in the right place, as you're to canter down to the river, but I must put mine on t'other side of the main road, above, so that I may get a good look at them as they pass. I'll hide the horse deep, so that they can't hear him whinny—whinny—and I'll sleep within ear-shot of the road myself."

"But lie close, Jim Ballou."

"To be sure! I shan't be in their way, and that's the reason I shall cross the road to-night. If I were to hide in these thickets, why, they might cut through and come upon me, and that wouldn't be so pleasant—not so pleasant, 'Bram."

"Mighty onpleasant!"

"'Bram! I've sworn a most stupendous oath!"

"Ki! wha' for you do sich t'ing?"

"Against the flesh and the devil, 'Bram. I had to swear to make myself strong, and I'll keep that oath too, 'Bram—though it's against a good spirit. Did you notice, 'Bram, how these fellows swallowed down that rum. Do you think they relished it!—relished it, 'Bram?"

"Don't 'tink 'bout it, Ballou. I knows dey relishes us better dan dey own souls."

"I'm afraid, 'Bram, I do too. I wished for some of that Jamaica, 'Bram—wish for it now. But I wouldn't touch a drop of it, 'Bram, to save you from the gallows—from the gallows, 'Bram!"

"Ki! you swear 'gin de rum, Ballou?"

"As if it were the devil himself, 'Bram!"

"Nebber git me to swear sich foolish oat' as dat. Rum is good for de healt' and sperrit ob black pussen."

"It will carry you to hell, 'Bram."

"But in a mos' heabbenly way, Ballou."

"Ah! don't I know it, and isn't that the devil's secret, 'Bram—the very devil's secret? But we must part, old fellow—part. You must be off at day-peep. Can you wake?"

"Kin wake whenebber I please, when I aint been 'toxicated de night before."

"Ah! you see how the devil works through rum. But I've sworn against it—sworn—it is an oath, 'Bram. And I swear again. Be a witness. Every witness I have helps my strength."

And he knelt upon the turf, crossed his hands, and repeated the oath he made before Sinclair.

"Look yer, Mass Jim Ballou, tek' care ob you'se'f now. I tell you, man—dis is de night-time, pass de middle o' de night—getting on to day mighty fast, and der's anoder one a-hearing you, 'sides 'Bram."

"Who?"

"De bressed Lord God, dat's jest now a-looking out 'pon we two poor sinners from Heabben."

"It is true—true! God is my witness!" said Ballou, in tones as solemn as those of the negro.

"'Member now, man," said 'Bram—"'member now!—ef you breaks dat oat'!"

"God help me!—good night, 'Bram."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE SCENE CHANGES—NEW PARTIES.

We are to suppose, for the present, that our scouts, on both sides, are equally prepared and willing to do the duties agreed upon and assigned them; that one set of the outlaws are to haunt the Barony, and watch for their chance, and take advantage of it; that Dick of Tophet, with the Trailer, his associate, is to "take the road" of Sinclair; and that these latter, in return, are to be followed by Ballou and 'Bram, watchful of their chances also, and especially pledged to see that their superior suffers no harm. We are to suppose, farther, that, for the performance of these several duties, the several parties are each excellent in his way; and that there are to be fruits, growing out of the tillage which they are to undertake, the quality of which, affected as all tillage is apt to be by the sort of seasons which the worker enjoys, may be of serious importance to all of these parties, for good or evil. With these points understood, we will leave them for a while, to operate secretly, while we bestow our attention, for a brief space, upon Willie Sinclair, whose movements are destined to bring us to the acquaintance of other parties not yet present in our action.

The guerrilla, or partisan warfare, is necessarily one which can only be characteristic of a very thinly-settled country—one of great intricacies of swamp, forest, or mountain. It involves, from this and the tributary causes, the necessity for a great variety of duties; the warrior becoming, in turn, the scout, the spy, the strategist, as well as the mere man-at-arms and prize-fighter. We may gather from what we have shown already, that Willie Sinclair had, besides, been recently required by the nature of the service, to play the politician as well as spy. He has been actually within the garrisoned city of Charleston

—garrisoned by a strong force of regulars—in the hands of the enemy, to be detected by whom was sure to be followed by short-shrift and sudden cord or shot. Yet he had lain there in close concealment, and in close conference all the while with leading citizens, for no less than three days. His emissaries, meanwhile, had been busy in the parishes along the southern seaboard, operating as far as Savannah, and even within the lines of the garrison—that city being also a stronghold of the British. The results, of great interest and value, contemplating a general rising, which should include both these *termini*, were all within his bosom, matter of life and death, upon which, in some degree, the fate of the war in Carolina—it's prolongation certainly—would greatly depend. We are not, therefore, to feel any surprise to find Willie Sinclair taking the utmost precautions for the safety of his person, as he pursues his way toward the village of Orangeburg, a post of rest for the British, commonly garrisoned by their troops, but at this juncture supposed to be entirely free of their presence, in consequence of the drafts which Lord Rawdon had been compelled to make upon all his garrisoned places, in order to command resources sufficiently large to take the field against the regular army of Greene. Sinclair had nothing, accordingly, to apprehend from this source—for a few days, at least—and his caution was only to be exercised against small bodies of mounted tories, riflemen, or cavalry, such as were commanded by native partisan rangers, of whom Richard Inglehardt, a person of whom we have had occasion to speak more than once, but whom we have not yet had an opportunity of introducing to our readers, was a very favorable specimen. Now, it was known that, though somewhere about the Edisto, and in the precincts of Orangeburg, Captain Inglehardt had none of his troop with him. A wound in the arm, which had disabled him from active service, had temporarily deprived him of his command which was operating with Rawdon's cavalry—an arm in which the British general was weak—on the flanks of his army, scouting, foraging, and doing the usual duties of cavalry, though really mounted-riflemen. Still Inglehardt, it was also known, was not sufficiently an invalid to be rendered idle of necessity, and it was understood that he had been doing all the recruiting which

was possible to him, within a limited range along the Edisto. What his success had been in this service—whether he had secured few or many recruits—was a matter wholly unknown to Sinclair, and rendered the utmost care necessary, on his part, in making his approaches to the enemy's ground. He pursued, for this reason, a somewhat circuitous route; and, stopping at Rumph's place, on Turkey hill, to leave a whispered message with a faithful negro, for the ears of his master, with which the latter instantly "*put out*"—knowing very certainly where to find him—Sinclair resumed his progress, and, riding at his leisure, contrived to put himself in the cover of the Cawcaw swamp, a tributary of the Edisto, and within a mile of Orangeburg, just after night had settled down upon the forest. Here he fastened his horse, hiding him away in a thicket which was not easily penetrable, and with pistols carefully reprimed, and his sword and knife convenient to his clutch, he took his way out and upward, making fearlessly for the village.

The pretty little hamlet of Orangeburg, though so situated as to constitute an important dépôt and port of rest and watch during the existing war; and the uses of which, in the same way, had been exercised in frequent colonial periods; was yet, at the time of which we write, a very small settlement, numbering somewhat less than two hundred inhabitants, white and black, in very equal numbers. The village lies along the banks of the North Edisto, half a mile from the river. It is neatly laid out, with some regard to regularity, and contained in 1781 several very decent dwellings, according to the notions of that day, and boasted of several well-bred and polished inhabitants; some of whom were comparatively wealthy. The buildings were usually of small size, seldom exceeding two stories, rooms and chambers being on a contracted scale, as is still the case mostly in the southern dwellings of the forest-country. There were two taverns, and perhaps as many lodging-houses for more private accommodation. A proof of the progress of civilisation, the jail was one of ample dimensions and adequate strength, and so located as, in the event of necessity, to become a citadel, overawing the settlement. It had been already used for this purpose by the British. There was one great fabric besides—a sort of bazar, the property of good old Christopher

Rowe, formerly an Indian fighter; in later periods a trader with the Red-men, who were wont to assemble in great numbers, Catawbas and Congarees, at his dwelling—the bazar in question—which stood on the angle of a square at the lower entrance of the village. Here he accumulated such stores as the Red-men craved, and received in return their furs and peltries. Here he had amassed a considerable fortune, retiring from war, if not from trade, and holding a position, from age and past performances, which suffered him, in his latter days, to go unscathed by either party during the progress of the Revolutionary feud. But, nearly down to this period, the Indian bazar of the old trader was usually thronged with his wild visiters, to the gratification of the lads of Edisto. Here, under the exciting influence of the strong waters which they too "parlously" loved, they danced and junketed after their grotesque fashion; their rude sports sometimes proving quite as troublesome to their more civilized neighbors—the boys excepted—as they were grateful to themselves. But Kit Rowe, as he was more familiarly known in the precinct, was well aware of the processes by which to tame their humors, and when a quiet suggestion, or an adroit diversion, failed to bring them to order, he did not scruple to soothe them down with an oaken towel—a sort of rule in which the old soldier had no little faith. He had learned excellent lessons of discipline, particularly among the Red-men, from frequent service in the old French and Indian wars along the borders of the Carolinas and Virginia—a region which admirably trained the young colonists of the south for the great contest which was even then in preparation with the mother-country. His commission in the regiment of foot, led by Colonel John Chevillette, is still extant, bearing the date of 1755, and the signature of Governor Glenn, a civilian, whose ambition it was to make a military figure, without the adequate bone and muscle for military boots. But all this is digressive, particularly as our veteran has retired equally from war and trade, and, at the period of our story, was in the enjoyment of a tolerable degree of repose—as much as civil war can possibly allow—under his own vine and fig-tree. His dwelling, one of size as we have said, with sundry warehouses contiguous, was now distinguished by as great a degree of quiet

as it was once noisy with its herds of Red-men. His grounds, stretched down in numerous acres from the outskirts of the village to a considerable distance along the river. One half of this territory lay still in the original forest, and a portion of this was swamp, dense, intricate, and overhung with majestic trees, forming a proper place of harborage for the outlying rebel.

To this harborage, avoiding the village even while compelled to approach it, Willie Sinclair made his way, and when the darkness promised to afford him adequate covering, he stole up to the house of the veteran captain. The latter sat in his piazza—a luxury with which no southern householder willingly dispenses, and on the balaster sat a tankard of Jamaica moderately dashed with simple water. They drank brave draughts in those days, were tough of brain as of muscle, and increased the potency of their potations at those hours when brain and muscle were equally permitted to forego all daily duties. We have reason to think that old Kit Rowe's noggin that night—at that hour—nine, or thereabouts—was of especial flavor. We may add, speaking from authority, that he was already half through it, and was meditating its pleasantness of flavor, in the last toss which he had taken, when his thoughts were suddenly turned into a new and very different channel, by a peculiar whistle on the edge of the wood, west of the dwelling.

He knew all about that whistle, and he answered it—and, just here, a word or two may not be amiss on the subject of the politics of the people in this section of the state. Of this matter, we have already said something at the opening of this narrative—have spoken at large in our historical summary at the beginning;—but it may be proper here to repeat that the Orangeburg precinct was divided in its sentiments with regard to the Revolution, divided quite as much because of principle as policy—that is, so far as the nature of the controversy was understood. But the subject of controversy was not very intelligible to our simple farmers, many of whom were foreigners, speaking no other language than the German, and but few of whom had ever been influenced by any motive prompting the study of this, or any other topic, the knowledge of which could only be gleaned from books. For that matter, when parties

rage, the true points at issue are rarely understood by the people — are rarely *made* before the people by their politicians — and, perhaps, are scarcely necessary to be made. But this aside Certainly, among our Dutch inhabitants along the Edisto, with certain exceptions, the sentiment, whether for or against the revolutionary movement, was by no means a warm or impassioned one, except among the young men — and they, as usual, were governed mostly by association, by feeling, and not by any conviction of absolute duty, the result of a calm discussion, and a full understanding of the controversy. The older inhabitants accordingly, like Kit Rowe, stood aloof from the issue; and as they had already served their time to the public exigency, their scruples and indifference were regarded with a natural and proper indulgence. Their sons, however, were not so cautious. They were to be found in opposite ranks; though, as rebellion has always a certain charm for young blood, the greater number were with the Revolutionists, and this preponderance as naturally determined the predilections of the aged and infirm. Where they could not take the field themselves, they worked in secret; found refuge for the fugitive, tended his hurts, supplied his wants, furnished counsel and intelligence to the more active, and did good service of which tradition alone preserves the record. Marion encouraged these parties to keep up a friendly intercourse with the British, and reaped the full benefits of this policy.

But enough of this! Enough that good old Kit Rowe understood that signal whistle, answered it, and put another tankard in readiness, with the square Dutch pottle, a good half-gallon receptacle, in near neighborhood of the ample cup from which he was imbibing his own potent draughts.

The coast was clear, and Willie Sinclair soon made his appearance, and joined the old man in the piazza.

"Take it *strong*, major," said the veteran, pointing to the vessel — "it's no use to waste good liquor upon thin water; and I reckon you're off a long day's ride. The Jamaica is good; — nine year-old in this house."

"A nod's as good as a wink to a blind horse, captain, and it needs neither nod nor wink to persuade a thirsty one. But our heads are not quite as strong now-a-days, as when you first

studied the laws of drink and discipline, and—what do you think of that?"—showing the color of the mixture.

"Too thin for service in hot weather and on a long day's march."

"'Twill do! 'twont exactly make my accounts square with the world, but it will suffice to bring me round. And how do you carry your shoulders, captain, under the heavy burdens of life?"

"Why, major, life is not a bad thing if you know how to treat it well. I don't know but I could stand the weight of twenty more years tacked on to mine. I shouldn't object to taking a jump backward twenty years, for I find, major, that the *got* is not so pleasant as the *getting*; and that it's in the *use* of life and not the mere *having* it, that we find all the good of it, and I reckon most of the religion too."

"Ah! if you were twenty years younger, captain, I might hope to see you on a trail now. Then I'd be sure you'd take the field with the best of us, and have a famous dash now and then at these British blackguards."

"Yes, indeed; and any color of guards. But you're all getting on very well without me."

"Ah! how do you know that?"

"I don't *know* it. Precious little do we get to know in these quiet parts. But I *feel* it. I judge by feeling pretty much, and that brings me intelligence. There's something in the wind that brings people knowledge of what's going on elsewhere. There's *signs* that you can't see, that you only feel, that help you to judge of the doings of the world. Now, though I don't hear a syllable of what's doing between the two armies, until its all over, yet I feel sure that the British are going backward. It's strange that I feel so certain; but I've always found a sort of—what do you call it—a sort of instinct, that seemed to tell me what was to happen whenever the affair was a great one, and likely to do us hurt, or give us help—to please us or to trouble us. And just now, I'm as confident of our gains, as if I had it from the best authority. Yet the last news was that Rawdon was driving Greene before him, as a drunken jockey drives a fast trotter; and didn't I see with my own eyes, his three brand-new Irish regiments that he marched through the village with from Charleston."

"You are right. We are gaining ground; and it will not be long before you see his lordship back with his new regiments a little reduced in flesh and spirit and in numbers."

"They have it hot enough for long marching now. It's been all day like blazes in the sky."

"We shall probably have some fighting under your own eyes before long. Greene has turned about upon Rawdon, and is in pursuit of him in turn."

And a long talk ensued between the two, in which Sinclair recounted all those events, in the relative progress of the two armies, which the other had not heard.

"And now, captain, touching matters more near home. Is Inglehardt still about the village?"

"He keeps his quarters there?"

"Where? at whose house?"

"Widow Bruce's, as you might have guessed."

"True, so stout a loyalist as she is, with such a profound faith in the graces and virtues of George the Third, must have possessed infinite attractions for so good a subject. But, while I can understand how he should desire to lodge with her, I do not see why she should accommodate him. She is such an aristocrat that, I fancied, even a good loyalist, unless backed by the *prestige* of an ancient family, would hardly persuade her to receive him. Besides, she's well off, and in receiving lodgers, has usually admitted those only who could assert their dignities without regard to their merits."

"Oh! it's all owing to the times. Everything's in such confusion now, that people who have got money need friends of all sorts, just to help them to keep it. Widow Bruce is more civil and condescending now than she was, and she takes in the drover's son, who is captain of mounted men, and never troubles his pride by telling him how often she has seen his dad, bare-legged, driving his steers to market."

"Has he recovered from his wound."

"Pretty much. It's a little stiffish, I reckon; but he's able to use it. I saw him not three days ago on horseback, and he used the wounded arm without any trouble that I could see."

"How has he got on recruiting along the river?"

"Well, I reckon the chance for him was small. He haint

picked up many, and the few he's got ar'n't of much account. But he's got some, and I reckon he'll keep 'em about him. If he didn't, there's enough about the village, at times—now that he's got over his wounds—to make a dash, and carry him off. But don't you risk a good deal, major, to be coming here single-handed, just about this time?"

No! I think not. I keep close, trust nobody, feel my way, have weapon ready, and my horse harbors close at hand in the swamp."

"The famous black! Ah! he's a beauty, and deserves a dragoon's confidence! But take care! There's some about Orangeburg that don't love any of your blood, and would make no bones of butchering you, or selling you to Inglehardt, for the weight of one of your buttons in gold. I reckon you are satisfied that Inglehardt would like no better trade than to buy you at any price."

"Ah! you think so?"

"Yes, indeed! If he knows as much as I do—if he knew as well as me, how often you get up to Holly-Dale!"

"I suspect, my good old friend, that he knows quite enough to feel no good will for me; I shall accordingly try to keep out of his clutches while I can."

"But, major, is it not rather a strange way to keep out of his clutches, by coming, as I may say, almost into 'em?"

"No doubt, could he see or suspect my presence."

"But he's all suspicion, major. He's the coldest, cunningest slyest, most suspicious person you ever did see, and wonderfully smart. He guesses at a thing sooner than any man I ever knew. And he has his spies all about. And he's merciless when he gets the whip-hand of you. Now, there would be no chance for *you*, if he once had you in his power; and he'll get you there, as sure as flint and steel, if you trust anything to Captain Travis."

"*That* is the chief danger, captain; and it so happens that I must trust to Travis. I have business with him; must see him; must risk something to do so; and must, in some degree, rely upon his word."

"Then let me just say one thing: keep knife and pistols ready when you meet him; and, at the first wink of mischief,

out with steel and bullet and pitch into him, savage as an Indian when he wants to feel the hair. There's no way else. Travis is in and out of the village every day. Take him on the roadside, and when he's had no chance to set his traps for you. That's the way. You can find out if he comes into the village to-morrow. It'll be soon after breakfast if he does. Then waylay him and have your talk out in the bushes. I know how you feel toward his daughter Bertha, and she's a girl that's a sort of beautiful apology for a bad father, but I can't help telling you just what I know is the truth. Beware of the father, whatever you may feel for the child!"

We need not pursue this conversation, though the parties did till a tolerably late hour, when Willie Sinclair, in spite of the old man's invitation, took refuge in the swamp with his horse, to whom he carried out an armful of fodder and a sack of corn. We need scarcely state that Kit Rowe gave the major a good supper, though at a late hour, which was washed down with a fresh stoup of Jamaica, when the young man was again exhorted to *take it strong*, as a security against the night air. We do not say that he neglected the injunction. There were some small matters of business, relating to the war, transacted between them, which do not need more particular mention, and the night had sped on to the small hours ere they separated. At dawn, Willie Sinclair had crossed the river, at the bridge, just below the village, and had planted himself in waiting, close in the thicket, but near enough to watch the river-road from above, taking Kit Rowe's counsel to intercept Travis without notice, and in a spot where, if his purposes were treacherous, he could possess no agencies, other than his own, for putting them in execution.

CHAPTER XXV.

"COURSE OF TRUE LOVE."

"Most acceptably come!
The art of number can not count the hours
Thou hast been absent."—MIDDLETON.

THOUGH prepared to wait patiently, for the appearance of the party whom he sought, Willie Sinclair was by no means prepared to wait in vain. But such was his luck on this occasion. Fastening his good steed in the deep thickets which spread between the road and river, he put himself in position, so as to watch the former from a spot where he himself might lie unseen. By nature, he was not a person of very patient temperament. His blood coursed freely and impetuously in his veins. His moods were all ardent. He lived properly in action. But he had somewhat schooled this nature, and partisan warfare is of an admirable sort to assist in the proper training. A few awkward little reverses, some surprises, and narrow escapes, at the beginning of the war, had been of great service to our young major, as to most of the partisan gentry of the country, in curbing their natural impatience of character, and quieting their impulses to more staid paces. Willie Sinclair had learned something of that grand and necessary lesson—so essential to all progress and development—so particularly essential to success in everything—to wait!

"Patience and shuffle the cards," he muttered, after he had lingered for an hour in the same spot; and he crossed to the opposite side for relief. But another hour passed unprofitably, and another. The sun, meanwhile, rose high in heaven. The winds were hushed. It was one of those terribly clear days in midsummer, when the sun rules with despotic sway; when the eye looks up vainly for a friendly cloud to interpose; when the

air is glittering with quivering motes, in that incessant motion which pains the sense to behold; and when the brain seems to reel and burn in sympathy with the hot glare and vibratory motion of the firmament. Where Sinclair watched, there was no need of shelter from the sun. Never was guardian shade more sure and solemn, than in those deep thickets. Great stalwart pines rose up out of a dense wilderness of undergrowth; cedars and scrubby oaks—a thousand varieties—all seemed struggling forward to crowd every interval of space, stretching upward as emulous of every ray of light, while, like the roofs of great cathedrals, of grand and delicate tracery, the broad branches of the pine stretched overhead, interlaced, linking arms, twining mazily together, and spreading great shields, as it were, above and abroad, so as to deny the smallest shaft of sunlight the privilege to strike below.

But, if thus sheltered from the glare, the region below was equally sheltered from the breeze. Not a breath could penetrate that sombrous and silent sanctuary. Not a leaf trembled under the pulsing pressure of the zephyr. It grew to be stifling hot, and our lurking major felt it necessary to change his position frequently, to escape the feeling of faintness which became too oppressive for endurance.

But change of position brought no relief. Even military patience could endure it no longer. He had now waited for more than four mortal hours, and in vain. He had seen no human being—nay, not even a squirrel. It was a time, it must be remembered, when the condition of the country, under the ravenous consumption of both armies, was approaching famine; and every beast of the forest, that could be made the prey of hunger, fell a victim to the insatiate appetites of a half-starving population. Squirrels and rabbits are rarely eaten in the south, and they multiply amazingly at ordinary periods. But now, if you beheld a squirrel, he was a disconsolate, wearing mourning for his tribe! He looked like one who felt his desolation. You might see him at sunset sitting melancholy upon the top of some rotten tree, musing sadly upon the prospect, like Caius Marius among the ruins of Carthage. We may surely forgive the impatience of our hero, if it grew restiff after four hours

of which, in such a region, and under such circumstances of heat and solitude.

Besides, it must not be forgotten that he was but a mile or two from Holly-Dale, and Holly-Dale was the home of Bertha Travis—that damsel of whom we have heard something already, of whom we shall know more presently, and of whom the memories, in the heart and brain of brave Willie Sinclair, were at once perpetually active and deliciously exciting.

Our major of dragoons was as brave a soldier, as ever smiled upon a broadsword; but he was as fond a lover as ever buckled a fair woman, like a belt of beauty, to his bosom. He was not, it is true, a soft sentimental cavalier; but he was an earnest and very passionate one. Love with him was not a mere sentiment. It was a necessity and a life. It was no small trial of his strength to require him to wait and watch for hours, when within a few bounds of the home where his beauty harbored; and it was no small sacrifice which he made to a patriotic policy, those four hours which he denied to love.

He could deny the tender interest no longer. Concluding that Captain Travis was not to visit Orangeburg that day, he resolved to seek him at home. He *must* seek him—*must* meet him—that day or the next; and this now seemed the only proper process for doing so, whatever might be the peril which it would involve.

He felt that Kit Rowe was right. He felt that there was peril. Travis, though the father of Bertha, was not one in whom faith might be put easily. He was a man who notoriously acknowledged no considerations superior to those of self. He was greedy of gain; eager for power, cringing when feeble, despotic when assured and strong; altogether, a man totally deficient in the magnanimous virtues. He was, besides, smooth and subtle; scrupling at no arts, to be secured by no pledges, when he might gratify any of his leading passions. Willie Sinclair well knew that there was but one method of securing and making him steadfast; and that was by making it his policy to be so. He fancied that he had the means to do this; and that, in fact, he had done something toward it already. But for this, he never would have perilled himself, alone, in the precincts of one bearing such a character, and

very well known to be in the actual employment of the British commandant of Charleston.

But Sinclair dismissed all his doubts as, mounting his horse, he took the way to Holly-Dale.

This beautiful little plantation retreat lay on the west side of the north branch of the river Edisto, but a few miles above Orangeburg. It contained about a thousand acres, some two hundred of which were in swamp. But a small portion of the tract, speaking comparatively, had been cleared. The produce was corn, indigo, and tobacco, cultivated by some twenty slaves. We may here mention, however, that Travis possessed a much larger number of slaves which he had contrived to secrete beyond the Santee, and to cover under the name of his wife's sister—an old maid in whom he entertained the most perfect confidence. He was thus, in some degree, secured against the vicissitudes of the war. But he did not feel himself quite secure, and he had in view even larger operations, chiefly upon British resources, which kept him perpetually scheming. If the British triumphed, he contemplated the valuable lands and chattels of certain estates, the confiscation of which was certain. If they succumbed to the revolutionists, there were still some processes by which to fleece them before they evacuated the country. And, whatever the final result, it was still necessary to his securities that he should drive a bargain with the *rebel* authorities. He could give the *paid*—such was his assurance to Willie Sinclair—for any favors which the revolutionists could bestow.

But we need not anticipate!

The approaches to Holly-Dale, whether from above or below, conducted you through long, dark, silent avenues of the natural forest, to within three hundred yards of the grounds and dwelling-house. This building, a comfortable frame-work of two stories on a basement, divided in the centre by a great passage, faced south and west, with a piazza running along in front; a wing at each extremity afforded two pleasant guest-chambers. The house was not more than a short quarter of a mile from the river, but a pleasant wood between, of massive old trees, shut the latter out from sight. The ridge upon which the dwelling stood, was considerably above the general

level of the plantation, and gradually narrowed to a promontory —a goodly bluff upon the river—the land on either side rapidly sloping away till it subsided into dense swamp; a vast thicket, thoroughly massed with foliage, through which, in times of freshet, the river swept unobstructed, and which, at all times, was penetrated by its tributary waters, creeks, lagunes, ponds, rendering it wholly irreclaimable. The ridge occupied by the settlement, being sandy, bore among its more massive forest trees, numerous groups of the holly, and hence the name given to the place. Suppose the usual outhouses of a well-ordered settlement, worm fences enclosing remoter fields, and neat white palings circumscribing gardens, over which white and red roses clambered at pleasure, smiling, like loving idiots, at all comers, and we may be content with thus much said by way of description.

Our major of dragoons was not forgetful of his caution. As he knew not whom it might be his fortune to encounter at the house, he proceeded with due circumspection; and, stabling his horse in the thickets, advanced on foot toward the open grounds. When he reached the immediate bounds of the settlement, he turned to the right, and made his way to the bluff upon the river. Stealing from tree to tree, he at length gained the banks, and looked out upon the stream, which rolled along placidly, bright as a silver serpent in the sunshine. At the distance of a hundred yards above, a little dugout—a canoe hollowed, Indian fashion, from a cypress—rested lazily upon the water, half shaded by overhanging trees. In this sat a youth, not more than fourteen or fifteen, fishing for blue-cat and perch. You have never eaten the blue-cat of the Edisto, gentle reader—or you have?—in either case you have something to live for. The blue-cat of the Edisto is one of the nicest fish that swims, tender as young love, white as maiden purity, delicate as a dream of innocence, satisfactory as a capital prize in the lottery, to one who has spent his last dollar in the selfish business of feeding hunger and clothing nakedness. Take an Edisto cat in July if you can—boil, of course—use as little dressing as possible, beyond the melted butter; eschew all fish-sauces, whatever their supposed virtues, and reconcile yourself, with all despatch, to a world which is still capable of such goodly productions.

Our young fisherman was evidently earning his dinner. Sinclair stole down the bluff, worked his way into the swamp, and, unheard, unseen, crept out to the banks not a dozen yards from the canoe.

"Henry!" he called.

The boy was in the act of taking a perch—a goodly subject for such treatment as Saint Dominic bestowed on heretics. The red-belly perch of the Edisto is not one of its aldermen, but it is nevertheless a good citizen—well to do in the waters—armed to make himself respected where he goes; and, not unwilling to take off his armor, when the fight is done, and suffer himself to be properly dressed for company and table. You may use your fish-sauces upon *him*. His delicacy does not revolt at strong condiments. In that respect, there is but little sympathy between himself and the azure cat, his neighbor.

The boy had just taken one of these goodly perch from the waters, when his name was called, in low tones, but sufficiently loud to reach his ears. He knew the voice, dropped the fish into the boat, and turned about, all in the twinkling of an eye, to face the summoner.

"Who is it?"

Then, as if he saw through all disguises, he cried out in a voice, a little sharper and shriller than was absolutely essential to the occasion:—

"Major Willie! is it you? Oh! I'm so glad to see you!"

The canoe was put about for the shore in a moment, and the boy was soon clasped in the arms of his military friend. Verily, a tall and goodly boy was he, with a sunbrowned, but frank, ingenuous face, and a fine dark, sparkling eye, full of intelligence and life.

"And how's all, Henry?"

"Well, well—all well."

"And Bertha!"

"Oh! she's well too; but she's not in a good humor. She's been cross to me of late. Won't do anything I ask her. It's all owing, Major Willie, to your not coming when you promised."

The major laughed merrily.

"But I'm come now, Henry, and we'll see if Bertha's humors will improve."

"Oh! when I say she's been cross, Major Willie, I don't mean *that* exactly. She's only been forgetful, and don't mind what I say, and *don't* do what I ask her. There, it's a week since she was to make my lines for me—yet see what I have to fish with now—old cotton strings so rotten that a good big fish would snap 'em all to pieces—and I do think she's never thought of them since. And you don't know how much I want 'em. The fish are now biting famously. See what I've caught in an hour. Three fine cat, seven perch, and two jackfish, in an hour—less than an hour; and if I had come out at sunrise, I might have caught twice as many; and if I come about sunset, I'll be sure to do so. The river is just right now, Major Willie—low enough—"

"And warm enough!"

"That it is," answered the boy, wiping the sweat from his brow—"But you're well, Major Willie? You're not wounded? Have you had any more fighting? Oh! I so want to see you a-fighting—in a charge, with that brave black horse! Where's the black, Major Willie—you haven't had him shot? He isn't killed or hurt? Where is he now?"

The queries of the boy poured out in a flood. Sinclair tried to answer them all.

"No!" he said, "the black is as brave and sound as ever; I'm not hurt, as you see; we have had some little skirmishing, but nothing much; and, as for your seeing a fight, Henry, I wish you were only ten years older, that you might try your own broadsword in it, and strike, side by side with me, in a charge upon the redcoats."

"Ha! wouldn't I then? How I would cut right and left! Hurrah! hurrah! How I could make 'em skip!"

And the boy yelled with the exciting idea. Sinclair put his hands on his mouth.

"Sh!—sh! A good partisan, Henry, waits for the moment of charge for giving the war-whoop! At all other times, his rule is to know first who may be listening. For we never give the 'hurrah' till the broadsword is flashing in the air, and we are ready to smite with it, over the shoulders of the enemy."

"Oh! there's nobody here now, Major Willie. You're quite safe."

"Where's your father?"

"In Orangeburg. He went over yesterday, and didn't come back last night—won't come back, I reckon, till to-night."

"Ah!—but mother and sister are both at home, and quite well! There's been no trouble, Henry."

"Not a bit! Oh! not a bit! All's so dull at home! We never see, nor hear anything hardly of the fighting, for father keeps a close tongue. Oh! he is so close—so shy of his words;—and then mother don't *want* to hear of the war—and *sis* is afraid to hear! It is so dull, Major Willie, that I wish you'd beg for me, and carry me off somewhere, where I could see something, and learn to do a little of the fighting myself. Why, I can't even try my gun. Father says powder's too scarce, and there's nothing to shoot; and that's true—there's no seeing even a squirrel;—and father's hid my gun in his own room. He says people would take it away from me. But would they, do you think, Major Willie, if I had a good lead in it, and had only time enough to draw sight? I'd like 'em to try it!"

"Why, you are, indeed, cut off from all resources, Henry."

"Isn't it too bad, Major Willie? And there's *sis* too, that don't even try to please me, and don't make my lines, though she promised me. And—"

"Henry!" at that moment, soft and musical, yet full and clear as a silver bell, sounding over a mountain-lake, was the call of a voice from the edge of the highlands.

"That's Bertha now!" murmured Willie Sinclair.

"Yes! it's *sis!* I wonder what she wants." And he shouted in reply, and, immediately afterward, darted through the swamp, calling to Sinclair to follow him. This the latter did, with almost as little deliberation as the boy, though with far more difficulty. The latter leaped lightly, and knew the way; the large frame of our major of dragoons rendered the task of rapid progress through the undergrowth a much more serious one to him. But he scrambled through after a fashion; and, with the frank, heartful ardor of an honest love, prepared to ascend the little elevation upon which the damsel stood awaiting his approach.

Was Bertha Travis a beauty? It is enough that Willie Sinclair thought so. She was certainly such a creature as

would compel admiration in any circle; of fine shape, medium size, graceful movement, and dignified yet eager carriage. Her figure was slight, yet sweetly rounded. Her eyes were at once dark and brilliant. Her cheek was somewhat pale ordinarily. It now wore a delicate flush which might be due to a brisk walk from the dwelling to the bluff, in that ardent summer's day; but was, in all probability, the fruit of the unexpected encounter with her lover. Such an event is well calculated to bring the blood of a young fond heart out upon the cheek.

"See who's come, sis!" cried the boy, beckoning to Sinclair —"see whom I've brought you, sis! It's Major Willie, in spite of the homespun hunting-shirt."

"He has been reproaching you, Bertha," cried Sinclair, as he ascended the bluff.

"Ah!" exclaimed Henry, "but I was wrong. See, she has done the lines and brought them. She's a good little sister after all."

He took the lines from her hand while speaking. She remained silent.

"Bertha!" said Sinclair, clasping her hand in his own; "we meet once more."

"You are safe, Willie, quite safe?"

"Yes; unhurt, and only much wearied. I have had a hard travel, in an anxious quest, and come for solace. Can you give it me? Here you have peace? Shall I say love also?"

She looked at him very earnestly, and he now detected, mingling with a deep shade of sadness upon her cheek, an expression of reserve and caution in her eye. There was something of a trembling motion in her lips which arrested his observation, and made him feel that something had gone wrong.

He turned from her to the brother and said:—

"Go, try your new lines, Henry, while Bertha and I talk of our own affairs."

The boy laughed consciously and merrily, and said:—

"It's almost too late for much sport now. The fish will be slow to bite till toward sundown; but I know you never want me when you can have sis; and so, I'm off. Call me when you get tired of your own talk. I'll be in the boat."

"Sensible boy," said Sinclair quietly, as the lad trotted down into the swamp. When he was fairly gone, the lover said, possessing himself of Bertha's hand:—

"What troubles you, Bertha? I do not misunderstand the signs in your eye, and upon your face. You are grave, sad—something has happened to disquiet you; but nothing, I trust, dear Bertha, to make you doubtful of, or displeased with me."

She released to him the hand without scruple, and he pressed it warmly in his own. A moment after she replied frankly, and with all that sweet natural impulse which shows the true heart, untouched and untrammelled by convention.

"No, Willie; it is scarce possible that *you* should ever displease me; and I have no doubt of your truth and love! If I had, I should not linger with you a moment. But I confess to doubts and anxieties of my own, Willie, that make me unhappy—unhappy, even in the possession of your love."

"What! why is this? What has happened, Bertha, to occasion these perplexities?"

"Willie, you must speak to me honestly and truly, as you can! You shall know all that troubles me; and I shall be too glad, Willie, if you can relieve me of my fears and anxieties. I do not wish to doubt, or fear, or feel anxious, in any way, where your love is the subject. I have given you all my heart. I need all of yours; and it would be the greatest of miseries and disappointments to me, dear Willie, if anything should happen to make me feel that I ought not to wish you mine, or to keep your pledges that you would make me yours."

She paused and looked most sweetly into his full eyes. He saw that her troubles were really felt, and no mere lover-anxieties, such as idleness and loneliness will breed.

"Why, dear heart, you alarm me! What can have caused these doubts, these misgivings? Tell me all—hide nothing! Has that subtle and treacherous Richard Inglehardt been at work, to make you fearful?"

Oh! *his* working should never occasion doubt or fear in my heart; least of all could word of his, or any one, affect my trust in you. It is not that, but something of a far different kind."

"And what is it, my own Bertha?"

"I know not how to speak, Willie;—it is of so difficult a

nature, yet!"—desperately—"I must! It must be spoken, Willie, for if I have given you up all my heart, I have not given up my pride; and if I am to bear your name, Willie, I must not feel, or suffer any one to feel or think, that I am not worthy of it."

"Oh! who can think or speak thus, dear Bertha? Speak! tell me frankly of your cause of trouble. Do not keep me in suspense."

She sighed deeply, and looked mournfully into his eyes. He would have drawn her to his bosom, but she resisted firmly, saying, "No, Willie,—no!"

But he repossessed himself of one of her hands, and his arm half circled her waist; and thus they stood, side by side, beneath the sheltering boughs of an ancient water-oak. And thus they stood silent for a while;—she, at least, silent, while he only interrupted the interval by entreating her full speech. He was now sufficiently anxious himself, showing more of the tender lover than altogether beseemed the rustic garb he wore, and his sanguinary profession.

"Henry said you were sad and suffering, Bertha—at least I gathered thus much from what he did say—but I fondly fancied that your griefs grew from my absence, as all that I suffer, at any time, is due to yours. But that there should be any serious cause of disquiet—that you should feel, or fear, my love to be a snare to your pride or sensibilities—I never thought or dreaded *that*, Bertha."

"Nor is it, Willie. Of you I have no fear—no doubt:—for you, I have but one feeling, and that one is the very life to my heart; but——"

"And for whom else should you care?" he exclaimed, almost fiercely; but she stopped him, laying one hand on his arm, and withdrawing, at the same time, from his embrace. She had now evidently nerved herself to a difficult task, and her eyes met his firmly as she lifted up her face. Her love was a very artless, ingenuous passion, and betrayed itself without reserve. In such cases, the pain is in the thought of giving pain. Bertha knew that what she was about to say must do this. Her preliminaries were instinctively designed to strengthen herself and to mollify the annoyance she was compelled to inflict. He

gazed in her sweet, sad, but ingenuous eyes, and subdued himself to patience, as he urged her tenderly to proceed.

"Willie, dear Willie, you know even better than I what difference exists in the several ranks of our society. Now, you know, that mine is comparatively of humble stock; and though my mother comes of good family in the Low country, yet, in marrying my father, who was an obscure Indian trader, she incurred the reproach and anger of her own kindred. They neglected, and finally cast her off."

"*She* was as good and noble as any of them."

"Yes, but in such cases, it seems, the wife sinks to the husband's rank, and loses something of her own. But be patient and hear me. It is a fact to be remembered, however, that they cast her off. Their reasons for this cruelty were to be found in this difficulty of social caste. The career of my father has not been pursued in such walks as could restore her to position; and you perhaps know that, even along the Edisto, there are many who do not hold my father of like rank with themselves——"

"Pshaw, Bertha, who shall cure conceit of its folly? and how great must be *his* folly who shall attempt it! These distinctions *here* are ridiculous enough."

"Patiently, dear Willie. You must know, too, that it is one of my poor father's weaknesses to desire, above all things, to conciliate the favor of the great—to take rank among the very people who despise his humble beginnings, and who, at best, when they make concessions, only tolerate those whom they fear, or whom they wish to use for some selfish or slavish policy. To me, the favor of such people is a thing of no moment. I do not despise it, but I would not seek it. Favor, friendship, love, must all come from natural sympathies, or they hide a falsehood at the core, and I care for no sympathies that are not free gifts of the heart—that the heart is compelled to purchase."

"And you are right, my Bertha. In this lies the whole secret and security of the affections. Have I ever taught otherwise? Do I desire less for you—offer less to you? To what, dear Bertha, do all these expressions tend?"

"Do not be impatient, dear Willie. I have so much to say, that I know not well how to say it."

"Let us sit, Bertha—there, in the shade of those cedars on the slope of the hill. The day is so warm; but a little breeze, rising from the river, sweeps up the slope. Let us sit, and we can talk more easily."

And he led her down the slope, and found for her a shady spot upon the dry leaves that strewed the earth. After a brief pause, she resumed:—

"I have not been kept in ignorance, dear Willie, of the differences of rank in society, which draw a line between my own and the more distinguished families in our county. I know my father's history—his humble rise, his poverty at first, all his necessities, and that the trade which he pursued with the Indians, was held in scorn by our wealthy planters. My mother, brought up in these very prejudices, was quite aware of their operation upon her own position when she married my father, and she has not suffered me to remain in ignorance. But, until recently, I never suffered them to disturb me, or to occasion any doubts of my own security in my mind."

"And why should they now, Bertha?"

"You shall hear in time. When you became known to me, Willie, and I found, and showed the pleasure which I found in seeing you, my mother warned me that your family was a very proud one, of great wealth, of old rank, and bade me be cautious how I suffered you to see that I loved you. But I did not then feel or fear her warnings. I had no caution, Willie; I only felt happy when you came, happier when you spoke to me kindly, and very unhappy when you went. I am afraid, dear Willie, that I suffered you to see this as soon as my dear mother saw it."

"And if you did, sweet Bertha, it only served to make another heart as happy as your own. Was there harm or loss to you, my love, in such heedless policy. Nay, was there ever more politic counsellor for love than the fond confidence which begets a love like its own, and is never so successful as when it delivers itself blindly to the faith which it feels. Why should you repent this heedlessness, Bertha? I have never trespassed upon, never abused it. It won back all that it gave—as

much as it gave—and unless you have learned to question my truth, dear Bertha, you have lost nothing, incurred no peril—only put out your affections at interest, in a sweet traffic of affections which have brought in rare profits—have doubled your original capital. You see, my sweet, that I too can talk in the language of trade, even in the affairs of the heart."

"Willie, I believe you. It is all true. But this is not all. As I was saying, I was counselled that my family held no such rank as yours in society; that we were obscure and humble; that your family was proud among the proudest; mine just rising from the dust. My mother spoke of all these distinctions too clearly to leave me in any doubt. And she did not undervalue me in her eyes, or disparage me to my own, when she told me that I was but a simple country-girl, having no experience of life among the great, ignorant of much that they know, artless, unsophisticated, too believing, too confiding, and with nothing to commend me, Willie, but a pretty face—and a true heart."

He caught her to his bosom as she spoke.

"What more! What more!" he cried—"did I ever lead you to think, my Bertha, that the heart of Willie Sinclair longed for more?"

"No, Willie; and, so far as you are concerned, I repent not that you have caught me in your arms—I sigh not because your kisses have been sweet upon my lips. They have been very sweet to me, Willie. They have filled my heart with a new life—a joy—that it never knew until I breathed under your love. Ah! Willie, is not this enough for confession! See how free I am of speech. And against this, mother warned me also. She knew that my lips still spoke as my heart felt, and she shook her head in frequent warning. But I loved you from the first, Willie, and it was so sweet, so easy to tell you so. I could die for you, Willie, and never feel the pain; and why shouldn't I tell you so."

"Why not, indeed!" he murmured, looking into her eyes. the tearful tenderness which he felt."

"And I told you so—and I gave you all my heart—and I told mother all that I had said and done, and she sighed to hear it, and had her misgivings still—but she approved when

she came to know you well—and her hopes grew with my own of happiness. Do I tire you, Willie?"

"No! no! It is so much music that I seem to dream. I could listen to you for ever, Bertha."

"And we were betrothed. Ah! Willie. I shall never forget the trembling happiness of that moment when you wrapped me in your first embrace, and I felt as if I were dying in your arms, but without any of the pang or fear of death. We were betrothed, and it seemed to me as if the world was mine, with all its moonlight, and flowers, and sweet breezes. It was a child heart that I gave you, Willie, having a perfect confidence in all the beauties and blessings of this world, and taking them all as your gift and yours only. Was it not all very foolish of me, Willie, so to think and feel?"

"Foolish, Bertha! This is the very wisdom of the heart. The child is apt to be wiser than the man. It is the faith, after all and before all, the generous gift of confidence, the implicit trust that believes only where it loves, and loves to believe, that makes the true virtue in love, and renders it the most precious of all earthly possessions—nay, more than earthly—makes it a thing heavenly, akin to all that is precious in immortality. Ah! Bertha, if you should outgrow this child heart!"

"That is the new pain that troubles me, Willie. My father knew of our engagement, my mother told him all; and, though he warned us all to secresy, he yet approved; nay, Willie, I must tell you, he was very proud of it—it promised to help him to the social position for which he had so much yearned. He said to me, 'The Sinclairs are among our first families—rich, popular, distinguished'—but this did not lift my heart in pride. No, Willie, if I felt pride at all, it was only in the *one* Sinclair whom I so loved to think my own—my own."

Ah! flatterer!—But did your father say why he enjoined you to secresy?"

"Not exactly; but we gathered enough from what he did say to learn that he was particularly anxious that it should not get to the ears of Richard Inglehardt."

"Ah! as I thought!"

"But why—what is Inglehardt to him or to me?"

"Of that hereafter, Bertha! We are still far off from the thing that troubles you."

"Oh! Willie, I wish I could not tell you that! But I must tell it. There must be nothing in my bosom, which I should seek to shelter or to keep from you."

"Speak fearlessly, dear Bertha."

"Well, my father, without saying a word to us, went down to see your father, and came back to us in a perfect rage. At first, he said, that there should be no engagement between us; that there was an impassable wall between us—that your father had grossly insulted him—that he had treated him like a dog—that your sister was the haughtiest woman breathing—that she had not noticed him at all, or so contemptuously, that every word, and every look was an insult;—that, speaking of you, Colonel Sinclair told him that the subject was not one proper to his mouth; that there could be *no* circumstances which should justify him in adverting to you at all; and when, it seems, my father mentioned, as delicately as possible, your attentions to me, then, that your father broke out in the wildest rage, and said that the whole suggestion was a lie, and that his son could never so much demean himself, as to think of the daughter of an Indian trader. My father, in his fury—for I never saw him half so roused before—said that he didn't tell us half the insults to which he submitted; and, at the time, he forbade that I should think any more of you."

"But he has thought differently since, Bertha—has spoken differently?" said Sinclair with a sad interest in his look.

"Oh! yes! But Willie, this makes no difference to *me!* Shall I enter a family which scorns me—which holds my family in scorn—which treats my father with contempt and abuse—which wrongs the family of my mother—and makes my very affections for you the means by which to do them dishonor?"

"My own dear Bertha! This has come upon me prematurely. All that you have said about my family rank and wealth is undoubtedly true; all that you have said of the too frequently idle distinctions of caste prevailing in our social world, is also true, unhappily. Col. Sinclair, my father, is by nature and education, a proud and haughty person. He is also a man of violent passions when under provocation · full of false

notions of blood, and the victim of many prejudices. But he is one who means to be just, and all his instincts are honorable, and all his sympathies are true. Forgive me now, if I say that your father committed a very serious error, if not offence, in broaching to a father—and such a father—a subject, of so delicate a nature, concerning his son, of which the son himself had never spoken. My father felt that such a communication should never have been first made by a stranger. This did me harm with him. You are not now to be told that my father is a loyalist. As such, he holds my course with the patriotic party, to be monstrous and criminal. We see each other but seldom now. Until recently, we have not exchanged a syllable for months. Your father anticipated me, and thus prejudiced my argument. I *had*—I confess to you—and *believe*—a difficult task to perform, in overcoming the prejudices of a life, in the mind of an old man, suffering from a painful chronic disease, and so irritable, in consequence, that the very opening of a subject to him which threatens to disturb old opinions, is calculated of itself to irritate. Your father finds him in this condition of mind and body, and—without any preparation—without any consideration of the condition of the subject—without even respecting his political prejudices—knowing too that Colonel Sinclair had personal prejudices against himself growing out of affairs that happened when the two served together in the war against the Cherokees—he bluntly proposes a sort of trade, your heart and mine being articles of certain value to be set off against the claims of the British crown—claims which, to an old loyalist, were paramount to all other considerations."

"Did my father do this?"

"So I gather from the spasmodic and angry speeches of my father, and from the partial report of my sister."

"And that sister, Willie? Is she so proud, so haughty, so scornful of the humble name of Bertha Travis."

"Carrie Sinclair! Oh! how little you know that sister from the report of your father. She knew nothing of his real mission till he was gone. She heard of him only as a British commissariat, seeking to contract with my father, for a hundred head of beeves for the Charleston garrison. Nay, there was a contract, and the beeves furnished, and it was only when

the contract was executed, that your father broached the subject of our intimacy to mine. This was after Carrie Sinclair had retired from the table. Her conduct was, I will venture to say, only what yours would have been under the same circumstances. You come down to dinner and find a stranger, of whom you know nothing, seeking cattle, and you are civil to him as a lady at your own table, but reserved, and not disposed to encourage familiarity or approach. This was all. In your father's eagerness to attain an object, he overlooked all its difficulties, never sought to anticipate them, rushed at them impetuously, and was baffled."

"Ah! but, Willie, the prejudice is still there. How can I enter a family which looks upon the approach of mine — its alliance — with aversion?"

"Bertha, my love, I am not aware that God, among his many mercies, has ever guarantied to man a perfect success and facility in the prosecution of any of his objects. This, which is true of all objects of human desire, is said to be particularly true of the affections. The great poet, Shakspere, whom, I trust, I have taught you to love and venerate, and to study, has especially insisted upon such unavoidable, nay, necessary obstacles, in love, and in love too which is most distinguished by its sincerity. Crafty love, bargain and sale love, trading and selfish love, calculating and conniving love, are all much more likely than sincere, deep, profound honest love, to attain their ends; for the simple reason that their ends are all meaner, more vulgar, more common, depending upon arts and interests, of a character not more noble than the driving of a clever bargain. It is *true* love whose course does *not* run smoothly, and I do not know, dear Bertha, that it lessens the value of the commodity that its impediments are so great and many! I never disguised from you the fact that there were impediments — nay, prejudices, of all kinds the worst — to be overcome. But I told you they *should* be overcome, dear Bertha, and I begged you to *have faith in me.* What shall I, or can I, say more? Suppose I should fail to overcome the prejudices of my father — suppose that he persists in his blindness and determined hostility to the real interests of my heart — is love thereby baffled, my Bertha? Will love submit to take its law

from blindness and prejudice, and unreasonable obstinacy? Heaven forbid? Though Heaven requires that its waters shall not flow smoothly, it does not require that they shall be dammed up: nay, dear heart, it provides the obstacles, and opposes the current, and drives it back, only the better to test its strength and honesty—only that it may acquire the necessary force to break down all barriers, and assert over all in triumph its living, earnest and life-giving sincerity. So shall it be with ours, dear Bertha! So shall our love triumph over all opposition of father as of all others. Nay, though my father never yielded—though my family still kept insensible to your merits, yet shall *I* so wrong them—so wrong myself—as to yield to the wrong, and give you up, and sacrifice myself to silly prejudices, or a blind mulish obstinacy that rejects, reason, feeling, and the claims of youthful ardor? But, there is no obstacle, here, however seemingly stubborn, which will not be overcome. My father is a man of warm affections, and most loving of his children, when most seemingly hostile. He has his humors, but they subside finally into concessions which better show his heart. He will be conciliated. As for Carrie Sinclair—ah! if you cherish one doubt of her, I shall love you one kiss the less. Know that Carrie has already commissioned me to kiss you with a sister's love, and to bear to you a sister's welcome. She is prepared to believe you all that I have painted you to her imagination."

The girl yielded with a sweet sigh, to the ardent clasp with which the lover folded her to his arms, at the conclusion of his speech. Let us leave them for a-while, to watch the circles in the water, if they please, to note the glittering shafts of sunlight upon the ever-glimpsing stream, to listen to the sudden voice of the mocking-bird which has just taken perch upon a twig of the tree not twenty feet above their heads, and there sits, balancing and swinging, while he sings of the gay life of the triumphant lover.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A PAIR OF ARCADIANS.

While our major of dragoons, seizing a brief respite from the toils of war, was solacing himself in the embrace of love, let us return to the village of Orangeburg, and make the personal acquaintance of other parties, of whom, hitherto, we have only heard.

The dwelling of the widow Bruce was, at the time of which we write, one of the most pretentious in the village. It was a *double* house of two stories upon a basement cellar, and faced with an ample piazza. It occupied a central position in the place, being situated in the main street some two squares distant from the jail in a northwest direction. No traces of it now remain.

The widow, herself, was a Scotchwoman and a loyalist. She believed devoutly in Britain and in George the Third; was fully assured of her principles, ready in their assertion, inflexible in their maintenance, and perfectly satisfied of the ultimate and complete triumph of royalty in its endeavor to maintain itself in the country. She was by temperament an aristocrat, proud, high-spirited, lofty of bearing, delicate in consideration, and tenacious of all the proprieties. She was a woman of decided character, with a temper of her own; of good face and figure, stately and of excellent carriage. At thirty-five or forty, her age at this time, she was not too old to cultivate the graces, or to feel the necessity of looking her best upon great occasions. She was not rich, but in moderate circumstances; and we are not to suppose that she kept an ordinary. Her house simply yielded its hospitalities (for a consideration, no doubt) to visiters of distinction. The magnates of the rival parties, alone, were welcome. Here, accordingly, my lords Cornwallis and Raw-

don made their headquarters when they visited the place; and so, at other periods, did the American leaders, especially Governor Rutledge, who was quite a favorite with the widow, in spite of his intensely rebel predilections. In those days, the utter disruption of society in Carolina—the fact that the Revolution had divided families, and placed in opposition the members of the same circle—led necessarily to great toleration among all persons of sensibility. The widow Bruce was an honest loyalist, but there were sundry honest rebels whom she could welcome to her abode with no diminution of her ancient hospitality.

Her house being aristocratic in pretension, it was quite natural that all *new men*, ambitious of position, should prefer it as a place of lodging, to that of Jack Baltezegar who was the professed publican of the village. Honest Jack was the democrat *par excellence* of the place; not one of that class of noisy, brawling, impudent demagogues of the present day, at once insolent and ignorant; but a genuine, simple, frank, good-humored fellow, rough and unpretending, who was willing to serve you and provide for you, and receive your money with thanks, and send you forth with a blessing when you departed. Jack Baltezegar was a good specimen of the village-landlord, as well in person and deportment, as in taste and principle. He was a baldheaded, ruby-nosed, broad-mouthed, lively-eyed fellow, short and squab of figure, with face and belly equally round and ample, fond of jest and dinner, and no slouch at a *rouse*, with a group of good fellows in the hall, after all the demure lodgers have gone off to bed. His tavern, which was of more humble appearance and dimensions than that of the widow Bruce, stood upon Main street, *i. e.*, the Charleston road, and was the resort of all persons of moderate means, of humble pretensions, and such especially as thought much more of their ease and freedom than of social rank and appearances.

Now, it was wholly owing to this difference of *status* that the lodging-house of the widow Bruce, was preferred to that of Jack Baltezegar, by our captain of mounted riflemen, Richard Inglehardt. Inglehardt was a *new* man; an ambitious man, anxious to shake off old and inferior associations; anxious to bring himself into constant communication with persons of

whose social rank there could be no question. His family, and that of Jack Baltezegar, had been closely intimate; but between himself and honest Jack, there was a broad sandy stretch —a desert scarcely passable — which neither sought to overpass, and which the ambitious captain would prefer to see increasing in breadth of space and depth of sand. Jack Baltezegar knew —none better—all the humble antecedents of Richard Inglehardt. It was the most impertinent sort of knowledge, which Jack was not disposed to keep sealed up from the vulgar sense. He might have been civil enough to keep silence, had Richard been sensible enough to have foreborne giving the preference to the house of Widow Bruce. Had he done so, indeed, it might have been the better for himself—might have secured him greater popularity—for, the truth must be told, Richard was more feared—respected, perhaps—than loved. He had abandoned his *caste*, an unforgivable offence, which moved the dislike of all its members; and he had not quite succeeded in forcing himself upon the affections, or the full confidence of that other circle which he sought to penetrate; and this moved the scorn and derision of his old associates—none of whom was more sharp and satirical than our excellent Jack Baltezegar. Now, Jack was, besides, though in secret, a revolutionist. He did not publish his articles of faith, it is true; and he rather avoided all question in respect to them; but, in his own way, he suffered the patriots to know that he was an ally whenever the wind blew from the right quarter.

It was not with any eagerness, we may state, that the widow Bruce consented to receive Captain Richard Inglehardt into her dwelling. She, too, was quite well acquainted with his first beginnings, and early associations. She did not incline to these, and she did not much affect the character of the man. As a lodger he would never, before the Revolution, have found his way to her board; but that event forced people into new and seemingly unnatural relations and the widow Bruce was compelled to recognise the claims of the loyalist captain, in a lawless period, whom, as the son of an obscure overseer, of no good character, she would have spurned from her threshold. Inglehardt felt all this, but was quite willing that circumstances should do for his desires what personally he might not have done

himself; and his good sense did not suffer him to feel any resentments in consequence of what he knew to be the real, though suppressed feelings of his hostess toward him. She despised him—that he knew—as an individual; but as she did not outrage his pride by any wanton exhibition of her sentiments, he was by no means unwilling that she should entertain them. In fact, he had nothing to desire at her hands more than he received, and beyond this he never troubled himself to consider for a moment what degree of sympathy might exist between them. He had few sympathies himself for anybody, and his heart was of too cold a nature to feel the need of sympathy from others.

Coldness of heart was the great and terrible infirmity of Richard Inglehardt. He could be kind upon occasions—nay, was habitually kind—forbearing rather, and when unmoved by selfish considerations. But the moment that self interposed, however slightly, he was as unscrupulous as a tiger. Mild and conciliatory of manner, slow and subdued in speech, patient and quiet under all circumstances, deliberate in all his moods, he was subtle, sly, suspicious, ever working in secret like a spider, stretching his meshes on every side, and ensnaring, where he could, with a restless cunning, that worked half the time from mere instinct, and the love of the employment. He was passionate in nothing. His hate or love was never a thing of extremes, never uncalculating, never rash. He could abandon, with small feeling of sacrifice, the object of attachment for a consideration; and could embrace his worst enemy, in the attainment of a new desire. Essentially cold of heart, he had no friendships, acknowledged no sympathies, and subjected all his feelings, with little effort, to the requisitions of the reason or of the moment. He was, in brief, one of those unfortunate men whose minds grow prematurely into strength at the expense of their affections. His intellect at fifteen was as much matured as at twenty-five. In short he had never been a boy. Ripe from the beginning, his mind was as subtle, and deliberate, as well balanced, and cool and circumspect, as if endowed with fifty years of social experience.

A mind thus constituted, without the eager passions and generous impulses of youth, rarely goes beyond a certain gradu-

ated and respectable measure of performance. It is stationary, usually — unprogressive, and, as it usually excites large expectations at first, so it is apt to disappoint its own promise in the end. It is, perhaps, true in general, that great minds are commonly slow of growth to maturity. There must be a gradual rise to strength, if permanence is to be attained; and the very sobriety of youth is really an unfavorable indication for the future performances of manhood. Of Richard Inglehardt, the calm, sensible, cool, discreet, assured boy, large expectations had been formed. He still remained calm, and cool, and sensible; and, in moderate affairs, even sagacious; but something more is essential to maintain the claims of such a beginning. That he had not advanced beyond his earliest marks, was, in fact, proof of retrograde. And he had not advanced. He had shown himself brave, but not brilliant; cunning, but not wise; calculating, but not profound; able in the performance of ordinary duties, but never nobly adventurous. As a captain of mounted riflemen, he had been diligent. He knew his duty, but he never rose to performances which cast a glory over the simple duty. He had never conceived greatly, as he lacked impulse and enthusiasm; and exhibited no resources beyond the narrow range of customary endeavor. The lack of enthusiasm is always a proof of deficient genius. Talents he had; an adaptable capacity for the work before him; he was a shrewd judge of common men; could conceive their motives; anticipate their projects; thwart, or promote them, according to the suggestions of his own policy; but enthusiasm foiled him; he could never comprehend the worth of impulse, generous self sacrifice, ardent adventure, eager and impetuous zeal. His cunning failed him usually when he had to deal with those qualities. He not only did not quite understand them, he did not believe in their existence; or, if he did, it was only to rate the possessor as lacking in that *common-sense* virtue which was his own and only secret. Now, a common-sense mind, with a cold heart, is a thing of cunning only — not of wisdom — not of virtue; — without magnanimity; capable of small operations, among small people; and usually failing deplorably in moments of great exigency, when it requires a brilliant conception to encounter the odds of an extreme necessity.

Yet this man, so cold of heart, so insensible to sympathy, so calculating in his affections—such as they were—was a professed lover of Bertha Travis. What was the secret of this anomaly? The contradiction exists simply in appearance. He was a man of objects, continually seeking something—always aiming and grasping; and, while in pursuit, singularly tenacious of his object. He possessed a dogged sort of perseverance, which supplied the lack of zeal; but his pursuit, not grounded upon the affections or the sympathies, but the result of calculation only, could be arrested in a moment, by the suggestion of any new motive of self to his mind. Of course, he was not wanting in animal passions also, and these become terrible powers of evil in a cold heart. His early years had been passed in near neighborhood of the Travis family. His father had been for several seasons in the employ of Captain Travis; as a keeper of his large stock of cattle, and, for a time, as the overseer of his negroes. The boy had set his eye, even while she was yet a child, upon the budding charms of Bertha. He had determined, with wonderful precocity, that she should be his wife. She was beautiful, and he had a taste for beauty, which was stronger than any feelings or affections of his heart. She had the promise of wealth, and at a very early period, he had discovered the almost universal power of wealth, and he desired wealth as a means of power. Power was his principal craving, and his aim contemplated every possible avenue to it. He had, accordingly, resolved upon making Bertha Travis his wife.

Of course, he felt all the difficulties in the way to the attainment of his object. The almost immeasurable space which, in a society like that of South Carolina, separates the overseer's family from that of his employer, presented a barrier, the height and breadth of which the calculating eye of young Inglehardt began to scan and study when he had but entered his teens. He did not even try to deceive himself in respect to its formidable impediments. The Revolutionary struggle was favorable to its overthrow, and he determined to avail himself of it. A time of general commotion in society is apt to be destructive of most conventionalities.

But there was yet another barrier in the little damsel herself. She had, strange to say, at a very early period, shown

herself singularly averse to the youth. The instincts of the young rarely deceive them, when they themselves possess enthusiasm and sensibility. The very lack of the former, in the boy, though she could by no means describe the deficiency, trace its source, or define its precise effects upon herself, was yet a source of dislike and aversion. She repelled all his approaches;—she did not fear him, but she avoided him. Her instincts rightly led her to regard him as of cold, selfish, unscrupulous character; to *feel* rather that he was so; and this, too, without expending thought upon the subject. It was only in the full rush of the revolutionary torrent, that Bertha Travis ever began to think that there might be any serious danger to herself, in the undesired preference which Richard Inglehardt bestowed upon her charms.

Still, up to a late period, his preference was of a somewhat undemonstrative character. He was not less tenacious of his object, because he pursued it quietly, in secret, and with a circumspect avoidance, outwardly, of all design. He had proposed to her, it is true, and been rejected;—civilly, but firmly;—sufficiently so to convince him that she was not to be won by him, through the medium of her affections. But he was not discouraged. He had been advised of her intimacy with Sinclair. He had once met him at the house of Travis; he had seen and felt that the latter was a formidable rival; he had seen the love of Bertha Travis speaking out in eye, and lip, and gesture, without constraint, at the approach of this rival. He did not hate Sinclair for this reason; it was the chance of the game that had given the latter his ascendency; but he resolved to baffle him nevertheless; to destroy him if he could; to make his fate, if possible, a means for acting upon the fears of the maiden. He had another agency for this purpose, in the father of Bertha. He knew the corrupt nature of Travis. He had fathomed some of his secrets. His study was to perfect his power over the fortunes of the latter, and make the condition of his safety, the hand of his daughter.

And, in the prosecution of these schemes, he had steadily engaged for months—nay, almost for years—and, with a certain degree of success, in respect to the affairs of the father—which

by this time, began to render him more than ever confident of his game.

And Travis, himself, a sly and subtle politician, had discovered the practice of the other; had begun to fear him; kept close watch upon his movements, and steadily worked, on his hand, to strengthen his defences, and multiply his resources against the moment of attack. He felt that he was measurably in the power of Inglehardt already; in other words, that the latter had discovered certain secrets which would greatly prejudice him with the British commanders, Rawdon and Balfour; a condition of his affairs which became much more complicated as he reflected upon the uncertainty of the Revolutionary issue. Were he sure of the triumph of the British, the game was in his own hands, provided he was willing to sacrifice his daughter to the man who held the secret of his erring practice. But this result was daily becoming more and more doubtful. Travis was too old a soldier, and too keen a politician, not to perceive that the resources of Great Britain were nearly exhausted; that, in fact, for some time past, she had been fighting her battles, through the weapons of the colonists themselves. The loyal Americans now constituted the best portions of her veteran regiments. The moment that this fact should become fully apparent to the colonists, themselves, would be, he well knew, the signal of their withdrawal from those ranks, in which, conquered or conquering, they were still only sacrificing native blood in behalf of foreign power.

But, let us view these two persons together, Inglehardt and Travis, as they sit, fronting each other at a table, in the chamber of the former, at the house of the stately widow Bruce Travis has been invited to the conference. It is the resumption of one which took place the night before at Baltezegar's, where Travis usually had a chamber.

See the two as they sit at the table. There they sit, smiling both, suspicious both, with the sympathy of an equal cunning alone bringing them together; each with a selfish object; each well aware that all the ordinary securities among men—loyalty, good faith, a common object, a common feeling—are all equally wanting to either party. Both are persons, to the casual eye, of rather pleasing aspect; smooth of face, lively of eye, intelligent of

visage. In both, however, the acute physiognomist will detect some unpleasant peculiarities. Neither looks into the eye of his neighbor. Both would like to do so, but neither is willing to expose his own. The lips of Travis show some incertitude of character; those of Inglehardt are firm enough, but the lips do not smile; they only part when he would laugh. Both are men of sallow complexion, and lark hair; but Travis is fifty; Inglehardt scarce twenty-five. Yet how equal in years! The latter was as old as Travis when but twenty, as he had lived only in the intellect. Whatever the moral deficiencies and obliquities of the other, he was not wanting in the affections, and a heart so much contributes to the proper human wisdom, that we may give him credit for even an intellectual progress which the other can never make. *His* mind is already old; *his* heart has never grown at all. The one has dwarfed the other, out of sight, as if it never had existence.

What pleasant jest has been provoking them to laughter? That laughter of the heartless—What a lie it is! What a mockery of heart and humanity! A laugh, to be of any value, to compel any respect or sympathy, must be down-right, honest—an ebullition which we not only would not, but can not restrain. A strained laugh has the effect of a serpent's hiss, a savage's howl, the child-like cry of the hawk. It tells of mischief. Beware!

But the parties know each other.

The laughter subsides, and both faces suddenly sink into gravity. An honest laugh subsides slowly. It is like a generous sunset which leaves its sweet soft purplish tints upon the sky, even when the parent smile is gone from sight.

There is no smile now on either face. Each looks gravely upon the floor or the table. Travis rises, restlessly, and lights his pipe which he has laid upon the mantelpiece.

"Will you drink, Captain Travis?" asks the younger politician in deliberate accents, measuring every syllable, and rapping his snuff-box with nice manner ere he pinches.

"Drink! I don't care if I do, captain. What have you got?"

"Jamaica and Monongahela, both."

And the speaker rose slowly, placed his thumb and fore-

finger to his nostril, sneezed with moderate emphasis, laid the snuff-box in a particular place upon the table, took out his pocket-handkerchief, passed it deliberately about his upper lip, returned it to his pocket, and made three steps to his closet, when he produced two royally large black bottles, both square, and both half filled with liquor.

"The Jamaica is particularly old, Captain Travis. It is part of a small supply which I had the good fortune to secure, during my last visit to Charleston, at the sale of some confiscated effects of Gadsden, and some other of the rebel gentry. The Monongahela, is of some age also, but it has no family characteristics to recommend it. It is a good creature, however, as good as the district can furnish of its age."

All this was spoken in low tones, very slowly, drawlingly in fact, with a slight nasal twang, which might, however, be due to the snuff, which Inglehardt too freely used, rather than to the natural tones of his voice. The whole manner of the man was artificial. His true nature was to be found in art—that is, in the exclusive sovereignty of his mental constitution.

"The Monongahela for me," said Travis. "I am half inclined to think that the Jamaica is hurtful. The whiskey never affects the brain or liver. The Jamaica does both."

And he poured out, as he spoke, a moderate stoup of the liquor, which he only dashed with water. Inglehardt was even more moderate. He drank but little. Abstinence was among his virtues. He never suffered his wits to escape from the leash of will and prudence.

"Neither troubles mine, I think."

"Hah! you never give them a chance. You are afraid of the bottle."

"Not afraid—only non-committal."

"A politician even in your liquors, as in your prayers."

"Truth. I give myself up to no excess in either. You may safely trust that Monongahela, captain. It is mild with age, and gentle in degree with its purity."

"What say you then to a stoup together of equal measure? Approve your eulogium by your own practice."

"Ah! if I dared; but I have not the head for it."

"Pshaw! you have head enough for anything. As for any

danger to your head from anything that both of us could drink, I should say it was impossible. Your head is as stubborn as mine, as capable of endurance;—nay, more so; only try it; have faith in yourself, and yield up a trifle more of your life to the follies of it. After all, there are moments when I fancy that drinking is one of the best panaceas for trouble. If I had my attic full of that old Madeira which the parish gentry soak daily, I should perhaps give myself no trouble about the workings of my own brain, or that of my neighbors."

"That fierce old baron, Sinclair, is said to have his attic full to overflowing of the oldest in the country."

This was spoken with unwonted abruptness for so delicate a speaker. But Travis was on his guard. He answered carelessly, and with great indifference of manner.

"So I hear! He has wealth enough for it. But his case is a warning against old Madeira. He has a pipe of it in his legs—gout-casks—which he can't tap, and wouldn't willingly carry."

"But the Madeira is a gout-remedy."

"So the fools say! It is the disease itself. The gout, like most of the diseases of rich men, comes out of the kitchen and the cellar."

"Nay, we know that it is hereditary."

"Ah! that sounds authoritative; but you are nearer the mark to say that *habits* are hereditary. The son is apt to live as his father taught him, and to suffer from the same sauces. They both spice the broth after an hereditary measure, and have hereditary puncheons in their pegs, accordingly. Catch the spawn of the old fish, and transplant to other waters, if you would take out of their scales the taint of the old mud. I doubt if you ever knew a son who was rescued from his father's *examples*, before he is able to perceive them, who ever exhibited his father's infirmities, physical or moral."

Inglehardt seemed to muse, and fingered and tapped his snuff-box, and fed his nostrils tenderly; then wiped his upper lip with an easy gesture, restored his 'kerchief to his pocket, and said—all of a sudden:—

"You have tasted of old Sinclair's wine?"

This was said carelessly, though quickly. Travis in a mo-

ment perceived that it meant really—"I know that you have been to see him lately." He perceived the snare. He saw that any effort at evasion would involve him in deeper suspicion; he determined upon a frank manner, at all events, and as free a revelation of the truth as he deemed it good policy to make. These reflections cost him not a moment; and he replied:—

"That I have, and first-rate liquor it is. It deserves its reputation. I paid the old soldier a visit some five weeks ago—bought a hundred beeves of him—and he very civilly insisted upon my dining with him—was very gracious, indeed, and gave me of the best. The bottles he put on the table were crusted with cobwebs. The wine was then twenty-nine years old. He mentioned, with a chuckle, that my Lords Rawdon and Fitzgerald, had brought up bottom, after earnest soundings, from no less than a score of bottles in one evening."

The wily Inglehardt was baffled.

"How the d—l!" thought Travis to himself, "did he get at that visit? I had taken every precaution!"

Of course, he knew, from the question of Inglehardt, that he *had* made the discovery. The only mode left him was to anticipate exposure by frankness, and disarm it. He could not disarm suspicion; but he might baffle evidence.

"Ah! my Lords Rawdon and Fitzgerald. So Fitzgerald has been there! That must have been just when I was laid on my back by this troublesome wound. No doubt they relished the old fellow's wine. They can't get such wine in England."

"No, indeed; Carolina's the region for the ripening of Madeira. Zounds, my lips smack of its flavor at the very recollection. I wish I had a thousand bottles of it—the contents of his garret would probably yield quite as many."

"And why should you not, Captain Travis?"

"How should I?—I'd like to know the process."

"It is an easy one when the work of confiscation becomes general, and spreads a little more from the seaboard into the interior."

"Ah! but how will it affect him? Why, he is as fierce and stubborn a loyalist as any in the country."

"Words! words! Do you suppose that his mere profession of loyalty will save his estates, in the teeth of his son's active

rebellion? Will his majesty's government suffer his estates to fall into the hands of the rebel, simply because his father *professed* a fidelity which he did not sustain in any other way? I see no reason why the Sinclair Barony should not fall into the general stock, and reward some true subject who has shown himself in deeds, as well as words."

"Truly, if such be the prospect before us, the pickings will be considerable. The old Barony would cut up famously. But old Sinclair is strong with Rawdon and Balfour, and I suspect the property will all be covered by the name of the daughter."

"Well, she will reward some good loyalist who has carried a sword in action, for his active services. Somehow, the property must go into the proper hands. The only doubt really is about the issue of the war."

"But can that be doubtful?"

Nobody better knew how doubtful was the result than the speaker; in fact, he was chiefly occupied at this very moment, in preparing against this doubt. But he knew that Inglehardt was sounding him. It was the cue of Travis to make the other believe that he himself had no sort of question that the British arms would be successful. The policy of Inglehardt depended upon this success; and, as most persons can easily be persuaded of what they wish, Travis took for granted that, though he seemed to intimate a doubt of the final issue, he yet felt none. Still, Inglehardt was not unwilling to suggest to his companion the fear which he hardly felt himself. He replied:—

"There's no saying. Troops do not arrive with sufficient rapidity from England."

"Three fresh Irish regiments only the other day," answered the other.

"Yes; but not meant for this colony—designed for Virginia, and only permitted to be used by Lord Rawdon temporarily, in the necessity of relieving Ninety-Six. Then, you see, these Irish troops are not to be relied on. The moment they get an opportunity they desert and join the rebels. They entertain no love for the British flag. No! our best chances depend upon the loyal Americans, and they come in very slowly now. Here have I been recruiting for a month, and have succeeded

in picking up only sixteen raw fellows, hardly worth their salt. Things, I fear, begin to look suspicious."

This was said with great gravity and deliberation, and a melancholy shaking of the head. But Travis knew his man. "He hopes," such was his mental reflection, "to win me on to let out my own calculation. But I know better than to commit myself to him by declaring my true conviction. No, no, Master Inglehardt, you don't catch this weasel asleep!" Then, aloud, and with some show of disquiet:—

"Pshaw! Captain Inglehardt, you are in a croaking humor to-day. You surprise me by such notions. As for Great Britain lacking troops, or being compelled to rely upon native Americans, that seems to me one of the idlest fancies in the world. Our loyalist troops are but a drop in the bucket."

"By Jupiter! Captain Travis, they are pretty much all that are worth having in the bucket. Look how the British armies are now made up. The veteran troops are nearly all American. The Hessians are pretty much used up; the Scotch regiments are not half full; the Irish desert when they can, are perpetually mutinying, their officers dare not rely upon them, and tremble, when they go into action, lest their own bayonets should be the first at their bosoms. Half of Lord Rawdon's force at Camden were loyalists; of the thousand men of Ferguson, that gave up to the mountaineers, at King's mountain, more than nine hundred were American born. And who but native Americans have kept the post of 'Ninety-Six,' under Cruger, so long against the whole of the rebel army of Greene? I tell you, Captain Travis, that the forces of Great Britain, now in the South, would be swallowed up everywhere, but for the rifles of our own people."

"And if this be so, Captain Inglehardt—which I am very far from admitting—what better proof can we have of the ultimate success of our cause? If, keeping her own powers in reserve, Great Britain can so direct the resources supplied by the loyal population, as to keep the rebels in subjection, do you not see that she can, at any moment, achieve the fullest results of victory, by only a slight increase of the foreign forces?"

"Ay, but has she kept her own forces in reserve? Has she not employed them to the uttermost? Why did she need to

hire and buy the Hessians? Clearly, because her own people lacked numbers, or were reluctant to join the war. The Scotch are not a numerous people. England herself cut off too large a proportion of the Highland Scotch, not to feel the want of them now. The Irish are unfaithful and not to be trusted. What then? She now depends upon them, chiefly, as the reserved powers of which you speak; and these, with our native Americans, constitute all her strength here at present. When you add to this, that the drain upon the British treasury for six years, will hardly now suffer her to hire more troops, or even pay those who are in arms at present, you will see that I have some good reasons for holding the present issue doubtful."

Now, Inglehardt had truly painted the condition of Great Britain, the exhaustion equally of her men and money; but, strange to say, he did not himself fully believe in the extent of the danger as he described it; he believed still only as he wished; but his subtle policy was to persuade Travis that he himself was beginning to be affected by those arguments, which he had reason to think had been already adopted by Travis, of his own reasoning. If Travis, now, should only be so far deluded into the notion that he, Inglehardt, like himself, was beginning to meditate how best to prepare for the backdoor of retreat—and, thus persuaded, should let something of his own meditations to this effect be seen, he should secure such further hold upon the father of Bertha Travis, as would most effectually place him in his power.

But the old politician was not so easily gulled. He laughed at the gloomy picture which the other had painted of the future.

"No!" said he, "Great Britain is like a rock against which all the waves of rebellion, though numerous as billows of the Atlantic, would chafe and beat in vain. The mother-country is only economical of her resources. She has adopted the true policy of making us fight the battle with as little cost to herself as possible. When it is necessary to put forth her strength—her men and money—they will not be wanting. Do not despond, Inglehardt. There is nothing to fear—nothing to doubt—there is no danger that the rebel power will ever succeed. As you yourself have shown, the native loyalists have proved quite a sufficient match, almost alone, for the native rebels

One error the British government *has* made, and that, indeed, is a serious one, because so full of injustice. It is a wonder, indeed, that it has not worked for her the most mischievous results."

"What is that?"

"She expects us to find her the troops, yet refuses to let us find the general officers. At best, all that our distinguished young men can get from her, is a colonelcy, a majority, a captaincy. They are not trusted as generals of brigade or division —have few discretionary trusts confided to them; yet could I pick out a score or two of natives, of this one province, who are far better fitted to plan a pitched battle than half that are now in command in the British armies. This is a blind policy. It is the one which Britain pursued all through the French and Indian wars, and it cost us immense loss in blood and treasure. It has cost us this very rebellion, which never would have taken place in the South, had not our own able men been everywhere thrust upon the shelves. Why, for example, should *you* remain five years a captain only, when such persons as Barry, and Sheridan, Mad Campbell, Fool Campbell, Bulldog Campbell, and Weasel Campbell, all take higher rank. I know *you*, and so do they; and they know, as I do, that you are better fitted for a colonelcy of foot or dragoons than any one of these people. Yet, after all your services, for six years, you are just in the same position as when you brought your own company into camp. If they could have taken your captaincy from you, without discouraging all the loyalists, do you suppose that it would not have been given to some favorite, some younger son of an old house, who was found too troublesome, or expensive at home? Certainly, this policy has done more toward keeping back the royal cause from triumph, than anything besides."

The speech of Travis was an adroit one. It was, in some degree, turning the tables upon his companion, insinuating an argument, *ad hominem*, which, in a case of even moderate self-esteem, might be found to tell. In other respects, the remarks of the speaker betrayed such perfect confidence in the power of Great Britain to effect the final conquest of the country, that it threw Inglehardt off from the chase of the one idea he had pursued, though it did by no means persuade him to any faith in

the honesty of the speaker in the professions he had made. As for the adroit appeal to his own pride, in the reference to the neglect of native merit, and its slow promotion, the bait did not take; though, we may add, *sub rosa*, that Inglehardt had been laboring secretly—(was it a secret to Travis?)—for a higher command, and had found his wishes invariably set aside, in favor of some young springald, of famous blood, and broken fortunes, from the mother-country. He felt the truth of what Travis urged accordingly; but it failed of its effect, in disarming him of his suspicions of the speaker, simply because he felt that the point was urged with the evident purpose to act upon himself. The wily man will distrust every argument, however true and just, which he feels to be suggested with a specific purpose, which is yet not openly avowed.

"Well," said he, somewhat musingly, and feeding his nostrils again from the snuff-box—"I am glad that you think so well of our general prospect. I confess that I had some misgivings. But what you say seems reasonable enough. It is clearly the policy of Great Britain to fight the rebels at as little cost of men and money as she can. I only hope that she may not carry her economy too far. War is an expensive luxury in which one can not exercise a very nice economy. Men wish to be paid well for the privilege of being shot and bayoneted. It is only the gold in the pouch that reconciles one to the prospect of lead in the paunch. As for this army favoritism, you may be right in some degree, Captain Travis. There is quite too much of it. In respect to myself, why, I certainly should not quarrel with his majesty's seal to a commission making me major of brigade, or giving me an independent legion. The thing has certainly occurred to me, but more as a something I had a right to expect, than because of any earnest desire that I have for it. But, as a poor captain of rangers, I am not uncomfortable. It is a snug command, easily managed, and, if I have only a small trust, I am relieved from all heavy responsibilities. If I receive no favors, I am at least not burdened with the sense of obligation. The neglect of my services does not mortify me to a loss of my appetite."

"You are more philosophical than I should be—than most

persons are," answered the other. "I am glad that I have survived all my military ambition."

"Yes—but you have not survived all your *appetites*," replied the other, with a smile which was something of a sneer—"Your ambition is more modest, captain, than some of your other passions. A commissariat is not a bad sphere for making friends with fortune. In truth, such is my modesty, that I do not know but I should be willing to exchange places with you."

"You would soon sicken of it," answered Travis, somewhat hastily.

"Never, because of surfeit," replied Inglehardt. "But I do not quarrel with your good fortune. I keep in mind the fact that your operations, with your economy, must all result in the prosperity of your future son-in law."

"Bertha Travis will be in comfortable circumstances should anything happen to me," replied the affectionate father, somewhat evasively.

"Why, Captain Travis, she will be a millionaire. Talk of comfortable circumstances, indeed! I would venture to say that, by the time this rebellion is crushed, you will be one of the richest men in the province."

"Pshaw! you talk wildly. Only comfortable—comfortable! A moderate estate, which, well managed, will enable a small family to live independently."

"No more? Well, fortunately, Bertha Travis herself is one of those treasures which would sufficiently reconcile me to such a moderate prospect of fortune. By-the-way, Travis, this thing drags a little too heavily. Though apt to take most things coolly, yet I confess, in the matter of the affections, I am rather an eager, impatient person."

And the speaker uttered these words even more deliberately and drawlingly than usual, and resorted to his snuff box, slowly tapping it first, then segregating, with the thumb and forefinger, the smallest possible particles from the mass, and feeding with it, as a young lady would feed canary or humming bird, the slightly reddened tips of his sharply-elongated nose.

Travis thought to himself:—"Now d—n the skunk, does he expect me to believe, or does he himself believe, that he has

got any warm blood in his veins! He impatient! By Heavens, an ounce of impatience in his blood would prove of better use to himself and to all other persons, than all the virtues in his carcass."

But Travis did not venture to speak aloud such "parlously" offensive matter. The reflection was instantaneous, and did not prevent him from a sufficiently prompt reply.

"It is not my fault, Inglehardt, that the affair drags so slowly."

"I am afraid, my dear fellow, that it *is* your fault."

"How? I have done all that I could. I have urged your cause to Bertha——"

"No, Travis, you have *not* done all that you could; and there are such modes of urging a cause as infallibly to defeat it."

"You do not mean to accuse me of bad faith, Inglehardt?"

"Not exactly that! I flatter myself, that, putting out of sight altogether what is evidently your preference and policy, I possess certain securities for your good faith, the value of which no one better knows than yourself. Now, I feel sure that you are not heedless of these securities, and I could almost persuade myself that, apart from these, your policy perceives, in my union with Bertha Travis, the greatest advantages to both. Let her once be mine, and our united strength renders us both secure, and enables us to work with more confidence upon the British authorities. Then, indeed, I might secure this colonelcy—assuming it to be an object of real importance and desire; and, instead of a mere deputy commissary, you might pass into the department as its head. Why will you not see these advantages as I do?"

"I do see them—I am certainly not blind."

"Hardly with open eyes, Travis, or you would do something more for their promotion."

"I do all that I can. I have urged your claims upon Bertha."

"Ay, you have said—'This man seeks you, and I could wish that you would be pleased to see in him a marvellous proper person.' That is all; is that urging *my* claims? Look you, my amiable father-in-law, that is to be—*ought to be*, at least—

and will be, if he knows where wisdom and safety lie together, —look you—is this the time, or is yours the situation, when you can suffer the tastes and prejudices of a silly young girl, that as yet knows nothing, to pule about her heart, and her affections, and all that stuff? Shall the plans, the schemes, the fortunes—nay, the very safety—of men, be jeoparded by such absurd pleadings? She does not love me;—well? In all your experiences of the sex, how many of them have loved wisely?—how many have married where they did not honestly love, and yet passed a very comfortable life of it? Why should Bertha Travis not love me? I am not an Adonis, true; but I have tolerably comely proportions. Do you not suppose that I will make her quite as happy—to talk in the ridiculous dialect of vulgar people—as that insolent fellow Sinclair? I am not brutal of habit, am not a profligate liver, have my tastes, as you know—nay, pride myself a little upon them—have had a very tolerable education, and believe that I can carry myself quite as much as a gentleman, as any aristocrat in the parishes. You do not believe—I know—that there is any prospect of your daughter forfeiting the usual amount of human happiness in becoming my wife?"

It was delightful to note the cool deliberate sweetness with which all this was spoken—slowly, softly, and sprinkled with the finest of Scotch snuff, in frequent parentheses. Travis was getting uneasy. He was not an impulsive man, but he had more ardor, and was more impatient than his antagonist, to whom this difference gave a decided advantage. He answerod:—

"No! no! I have no doubt that you will make my daughter as happy as anybody else; and I have urged upon her these very arguments. I have counselled, entreated, argued the matter with her——"

"A moment, my dear Travis, a moment. This is going over old ground. You have told me of these pleas and arguments before Of course they did not convince Bertha Travis, and, of course, also, they do not satisfy me. She is a young damsel, who has had very much her own way, and is tickled just now with certain girlish fancies, which persuade her that one Willie Sinclair, major of dragoons in the rebel service, is the only true

God in the heaven of a young girl's heart. Now, a young woman's fancy, having such a tickler, is not prepared to listen to an old man's prosing philosophies, meant to persuade her into quite another sort of fancy for another sort of man. No! no! no argument of man, however wise in reason and profound in policy, could ever hold its ground, or make any impression, against a young girl's fancy. Her fancy, my dear good Travis, becomes her religion. She has no other faith for the time being —not till she gets a new fancy, potent enough to push the old one from its place."

"Why, what would you have me to do? I have tried— I have told her——"

"Suffer me again, my dear captain. Suppose that, instead of a dozen, you had urged these arguments upon her a thousand times? What then? Do you deceive yourself with the notion that a mere repetition, however frequently made, of an argument, or a plea, which the ear of the hearer refuses to receive, will avail you anything more than a single urging? The mere repetition of a plea or a petition, which was held to be distasteful at the first, only renders it more and more distasteful as you continue to urge it."

"What would you have me do?"

"Have you told her, sir—that this marriage is necessary to your safety? That, unless it takes place, her father is in danger of being punished as a swindler, as a forger of false accounts, as a speculator of the public moneys, as, in short, a traitor to the cause of his majesty, George the Third, king of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, defender of the faith, &c. Have you told her this, Captain Travis?"

Now fancy all this matter delivered with the utmost deliberation, quietly, even gently, in the softest tones, and without a single passage or word being emphasized, in obedience to the requisition of its own import. Fancy all this, if you would conceive the cold, stern, deliberate, strategic nature of Richard Inglehardt. No wonder that a cold sweat stood upon the forehead of Captain Travis as he listened.

But Travis was a man of passions. He had a quickening pulse—was not without pride—was a father, and a fond one —though, no doubt, a great rascal—and he irked greatly at

the cold remorseless tyranny of the man who had him in his power—he, too, the son of his overseer!

He started from his seat, and strode across the room, his lips white with rage.

"No! Captain Inglehardt. I have told her none of these things, for I believe none of them—I hold none of them to be true."

"Ah! my friend, you are rash now. You are surely forgetful of all your reason and experience. I do not wish to wound your pride, or rouse your passion. My appeal is to your common sense!"

"D—n common sense."

"As you please—after you have heard. Now do me the kindness to examine these papers. You need not be angry with them, and seek to destroy them—or you may—it matters not. They are only copies. You will find there some memoranda which would be of considerable interest to Colonel Balfour in the future discussion of your accounts. You will see that the facts can all be established by good witnesses. I need not tell you that I am in possession of all the facts, and all the clues, to your transactions for government during the last three years. I need not add to a gentleman of such clear understanding as yourself, that these proofs, laid before either of the generals of the crown would lead to the confiscation of other estates than those of old Sinclair. I gave you a proof of these papers on a previous occasion, my dear Travis. Why will you force me to idle reiteration."

All this was articulated with admirable slowness, softness, and subdued manner, while a most gentle smile lighted up the amiable eyes of the speaker. But the speech did not much mitigate the indignation of Travis. He snatched the proffered papers from the hands of the speaker, dashed them on the floor, and stamped them under feet, saying, as he did so:—

"Ay, sir, but you used no such offensive language when you spoke of this matter before. You spoke of it only as certain mistakes and miscalculations in my accounts, and never dared to apply such epithets to my name as you have just now. Now, Captain Inglehardt, I give you to know that though fifty years of age—twice your age, sir—I have not lost the capacity, or

survived the spirit, which would resent or punish offence. You presume, sir, on a fancied power, to offer insult. But, beware, sir! Another repetition of this offence, and the terms between us must be blood—sir—blood!—your blood or mine."

Inglehardt listened to this outburst with amazing calm. He sniffed at the snuff while the other was speaking, and kerchiefed his nose with praiseworthy care and deliberation. When Travis ceased, he answered in the sweetest temper:—

"My dear captain, you are unnecessarily angry. I had no purpose to make you so. As for the issue which you threaten, I have only to pray that when the storm comes I may have a dry roof over me. But pistols will hardly be taken in evidence against the truth; pistols will do little to settle my accounts with you, or yours with the crown. You may judge for yourself, by a single moment of reflection, of what avail they will be here between us, and in the adjustment of our little differences. Either what I say is true, or it is not. If not true, you have only to defy the charge, and concede nothing that I demand in the belief that it is true. If true, and the matter should involve your safety in any wise, as I most respectfully think it does, then you know the terms upon which, alone, the evidence is to be suppressed. Suffer me to repeat them. You are within three weeks to possess me of the hand of your daughter. I care not what arguments you use—I but suggested to you such as you might use, and such as would probably prove effectual—and leave it to you to find better if you can. Once more—your daughter's hand to be mine in three weeks, sir—three weeks, Captain Travis! Three weeks may be held a liberal term of time, added to a negotiation which has been in progress nearly three years, in all which time, sir, I have been in possession of many other little proofs of errors in your accounts which I have foreborne to include in that catalogue."

The whole manner of this speech was cruelly civil, moderate of tone—even gentle—and so very deliberate!

For a moment Travis glared upon the speaker with eyes of ill-suppressed hostility. But he tamed himself down, with a few hurried strides about the room, during which Inglehardt wonderfully kept his composure and his chair. Suddenly Travis stood before him.

"You are bent on driving me to the wall, Captain Inglehardt."

"No, sir — only in keeping you from falling under the wall. I so admire your fortunes and the prospect before you, that I would unite mine with yours. Why will you persist in seeing anything unfriendly in this?"

"Why press this matter just now? Why not wait till the war is over?"

"I do not see why love should wait on war a single moment. In the days of chivalry they went hand in hand together. Shall I eat no sweets to-day, because I may be slain in battle to-morrow. Nay, is not that very danger good reason why I should enjoy my sweets to-night? Because nations fight, and I wear harness like the rest, shall I forswear wiving; or shall the woman I love be tutored not to wed me, lest I never come home from battle. In brief, Captain Travis, I have resolved, and you know to what extent. You have my ultimatum. Briefly, will you pledge me the hand of Bertha Travis, the marriage to take effect three weeks from this day — not a day later. Understand me, it must be your positive pledge, now — I shall not be content with any promise that you will plead to her again after the old fashion. Will you give me this pledge?"

The other hurriedly paced the room in silence. He felt himself in the toils; but he had a refuge, and his secret thought — that of the veteran politician always — readily suggested that to gain time was to gain escape. Three weeks embody a world of possibilities. The domain of chance is always a refuge to one in an emergency. Besides — he had his own schemes — and these were rapidly ripening to fulfilment. Three weeks were all that he desired for these. He determined, as it were desperately; and, turning to his antagonist, said:—

"Captain Inglehardt, you hold me and my daughter to hard conditions. You may be a good man and may prove a good husband, but by —— you are one of the d—dest cold-blooded tyrants whom I know! But enough! I give you my pledge. It shall be as you say. In three weeks! I yield, sir. You have taken an ungenerous advantage, and I submit! But that shall not make me think more favorably of your mind and heart You are, I repeat, a most cold-blooded and deliberate tyrant, where you have the power!"

The other smiled with satanic sweetness.

"You do me wrong, Travis. A lover is justified in his exactions in due degree with the extremity of his passion. Come, sir! let us drink the wedding-day—this time, in a more classical beverage than either Jamaica or Monongahela. Here, sir, is a bottle of old Madeira—not, perhaps, so old as that of Baron Sinclair's, but of more sterling body."

"Thank you, no! I will not drink another drop with you today! I would I could never see you again, Richard Inglehardt—never! never!"

The other, this time, laughed—and such a short choking laugh, that Travis hastily bade him good day, and looking still as angry as ever, darted out of the room.

"Remember your pledge, Captain Travis," the other called after him, almost as deliberately as ever—"Remember, sir! Remember!"

And when he had gone, the eyes of Inglehardt darkened into a scowl—and he muttered:—

"I have him under my heel—have her at my mercy, or *will* have her—and we shall soon see who shall be the scorned and who the scorner? He can not elude me—can not escape—and he knows it! He will and must use the arguments I have put into his mouth, and she must submit. Ha! ha! She shall to the altar, or he to the halter!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

MEETING OF TRAVIS AND SINCLAIR.

"Sirrah, go up and wind toward Buckley's lodge:
I'll cast about the bottom with my hound,
And I will meet thee under Cony-oak."
Merry Devil of Edmonton.

You suppose, no doubt, that Travis disappeared from the chamber of Inglehardt in a towering passion—that he was fairly and uncomfortably cornered—driven to the wall, as he himself phrased it! Not a bit of it! His most admirable effects of passion were all simulated. He had really gained a point in the game. His policy was to lull his antagonist into the belief that he *was* at his mercy—in order to gain the very time that was accorded him. His vexation and rage were meant to show that he *felt* himself foiled, detected, exposed, in danger; that he had no further chance of escape, or means of evasion; and, therefore, that his surrender, at discretion, was a necessity, which he honestly acknowledged and submitted to, however unwillingly. Of course, if he were not conquered, why lose his temper? If he had any other weapons of argument or evasion, why use his tongue—why hint at pistols? Briefly, Travis, however apparently chafed and excited when he left his antagonist, was really quite satisfied with the result of the interview. It did not appear that Inglehardt had made any new discoveries of importance, except the single fact of his having visited old Sinclair and dined at his table; a fact which had its business justification—*public* business too;—and, in respect to all this affair, Travis flattered himself that he had amply baffled the inquisitor.

Three weeks were thus gained! Three weeks, at this particular juncture, and with such plans as he had in meditation.

ripening rapidly for the future, were an eternity! They promised him all the time that he desired. His daughter should *not* be sacrificed to such a cold-blooded and paltry despot! Travis loved his daughter, we may state, quite as fondly as it was in his power to love anything. He would have cheerfully sacrificed his wealth, well or ill acquired, to the happiness of his two children. Let this be taken in allowance, as a human set-off to his otherwise slavish propensity to gain. He was still capable of some sacrifice of *self* for the happiness of another.

Travis had a room at Jack Baltezegar's. When he went thither, from the chamber of Inglehardt, he found certain persons awaiting him on business; for he still acted, it must be remembered, as a sort of sub-commissary of the British army in Carolina. He dined at Baltezegar's and took his way homeward at a moderately early hour in the afternoon. He had ridden some two miles after crossing the Edisto bridge, when he was startled by discovering a stranger suddenly riding out of the woods on his left, and joining him. At first, he did not recognise the new-comer, till the voice of Willie Sinclair made him known. He rejoiced at the meeting. This interview was a necessary part of those maturing plans, by which Travis calculated to foil the cunning and the treachery of Richard Inglehardt. It was an honest welcome, therefore, that he gave to our major of dragoons in the eager speech:—

"Major Sinclair, I am truly glad to see you."

Travis really desired to see his daughter the wife of Sinclair. He honored the young man—honored his family position, and was right well pleased that his daughter's affections squared so happily with his own projects and desires. The meeting seemed a pleasant omen.

"I have kept my word, Captain Travis."

"And I will keep mine, sir," answered the other with earnest emphasis.

"Let us ride into the thicket, sir," said Sinclair, "and confer at once upon this matter."

"Why not go home with me? We can talk there in perfect safety."

"No, sir; I must risk nothing just now! I prefer that our

conference should take place in this wood. It is the safer place."

"Do not show yourself suspicious, Major Sinclair," said the other. "I am dealing with you honorably."

"So I hope, sir—so, indeed, I believe! But caution does not necessarily imply suspicion, Captain Travis, and even if it did, in the present instance, it by no means regards *you* as its object. But I have reason to think that my steps are watched, while at your plantation. I am half inclined to think they are dogged now. And with such a wily enemy as Richard Inglehardt in the neighborhood, as I am told he is, one can not be too vigilant."

"You are right, sir. He is a wily rascal! a liquid serpent, who will glide into the porches of your dwelling, and coil himself in a corner, yet sound no rattle. I have just parted with him, and we have had a long, and, on my side, an angry conference. But I have thrown him off the scent. It will be prudent, indeed, that you should *not* appear, just now, at my plantation. It might undo much that I flatter myself has been well done."

And, thus speaking, Travis followed Sinclair deep into the right-hand wood. The two forced their way forward through its thickest recesses, till they drew rein within a hundred yards of the river. Here they dismounted; and, each holding his bridle by the hand, they prepared to seat themselves upon a fallen tree. Travis had actually found a spot, and had turned his back, about to sit upon the tree, when Sinclair grasped his wrist suddenly, and drew him away.

"What's the matter?"

"Your friend Inglehardt is just behind you."

"The d—l he is!"

He turned and looked where Sinclair pointed, and the crest of a rattlesnake, in his coil, was perceptible, raised directly behind the log where he was about to seat himself. Giving his bridle into the hands of Travis, Sinclair caught up a broken branch and brained the beast at a blow. Then the two seated themselves.

"Well, Major Sinclair," said Travis, "I trust you come pre

pared to adjust our business. You got my last despatch You have communicated with General Marion on the subject.'

"Yes, sir: I have omitted nothing which could possibly be thought necessary to be known and understood between us, as essential to bringing about the desired consummation of our mutual objects. I understand you to say that you are prepared to ally your fortunes with those of the country—to shake off the connection with the British, and to prove your good faith by putting us in possession of such information as will materially help our cause in future."

"More than this, Major Sinclair, I am possessed of the power to *hurt* as well as *help*—to hurt as seriously as help. I am possessed of proofs of a conspiracy in Charleston to surprise and destroy the British garrison, in that place;—proofs which are so conclusive, that, if once known to Balfour or Rawdon, would bring sixty-three of its best citizens to the gallows. To satisfy *you*, that I do not speak idly, I need but add that I know that *you yourself have recently communicated with these same citizens within the capital—that you were there three days, concealed, and in disguise; and that you brought away with you a concerted plan of operations which, I suppose, you have either delivered to General Marion, or have still in your possession!* Now, sir, you see that I possess the means of hurt and injury, to as great a degree, as the means of help and service to your cause."

"I would rather, Captain Travis, that you had *not* referred to this power of hurt which you possess;—would rather have had you make a freewill offering of patriotism to your country, however late, growing out of honest sympathies, and proper convictions!"

The rebuke was uttered with cold gravity. Travis felt it, though he was not the man to forego the assertion of all his arguments and resources when a bargain was to be driven. He replied—hastily:—

"Do not mistake me, Major Sinclair. My purpose was not to threaten or annoy, but simply to assure you that I do not make a vain boast, when I tell you of the large value of my information, and of the importance of those services which I can render to your cause, in return for the securities which I demand for the future. I would have you also, individually,

Major Sinclair, be assured of my good faith; a guaranty for which may be perceived in the countenance which I have given you, tacitly, in your attentions to my daughter."

"Let me entreat you, Captain Travis, to make no reference to your daughter, or to my affections in this business. These are things apart, sacred, to themselves—not to be sullied by calculations of selfishness of any kind—not to be mixed up with the interests of war; still less to enter into any of the conditions of this present negotiation."

"Well, sir, as you please," answered the other, a little disquieted at this second rebuke, and feeling irked somewhat by the proud and haughty mode in which Sinclair treated every approach to subjects not actually necessary to the consideration of the one topic under view.

"You are somewhat scrupulous and nice in these matters, major, but I don't know but you are right. You will forgive, to a father's anxieties for his daughter's happiness, the allusion which you regard as irrelevant. To our simple business then. What does General Marion say to my propositions?"

"General Marion, you are aware, possesses none but military powers. He approves of all the propositions you make, so far as they fall within his province. But the general scope of your desire renders necessary the consideration of another distinguished person—and there is but one person only who can decide upon it."

"I am fully aware of that! Well, sir, will *he* see me? can I have a meeting with *him* in person, sir?—for it will be to him only, in person, that I will confide my papers—my facts—proofs—"

"Read that billet, Captain Travis," said the major, handing him a scrap of paper—"you are acquainted with the handwriting, and will recognise the signature. You will see that I have forborne nothing toward bringing about the result which I desire equally with yourself—and that the interview will be accorded you. Everything, after that, will depend upon the value of the evidence you offer—that evidence being necessary to inspire the proper degree of faith in your pledges for the future."

The billet, which Travis received and read, ran as follows:—

"If he of H—— l—— [Holly-Dale] is honest, and will speak the truth, giving proof as he promises, he shall have the guaranty which he seeks. I will give him the meeting. See to the arrangements for it as soon as possible. We have reached that stage of the game, when the loss of a pawn may be that of a castle; when the gain, even of a pawn, may enable us to give check-mate to a king!

"J. R."

"It is *his* signature!" said the other musingly. "He will meet me at Holly-Dale—but when?"

This was spoken eagerly, but with an air of considerable satisfaction—not to say exultation. The secret feeling of Travis was, indeed, one of triumph—but it was because of the conviction that he was now in a fair way to shake himself free of Inglehardt, and to achieve the full security of his possessions from the growing power which he began to fear beyond all other—that of the Revolutionists. But Sinclair regarded the expression of his satisfaction with suspicion. He knew not the full extent of Travis's recent fears.

"Captain Travis," said the major of dragoons—"in making the arrangements for this interview, I have not at any moment forgotten that I may be placing in the hands of an enemy, one of the greatest persons in this commonwealth—one who has been the leading spirit of our cause in Carolina, for five years;—one whose loss to us would seriously endanger our cause, at this moment. I have done what most persons would think a very rash thing, knowing what *your* course hitherto has been, I have pledged my honor for your fidelity! Now, mark me, sir; should you betray my pledges—should you abuse the trust reposed in you—should anything happen to this distinguished person, of evil, bonds, or blows, when he comes to this meeting—then, sir, whatever my sympathies for you—however necessarily and earnestly anxious for your safety and happiness, and for the peace and happiness of your family—how dear to me, I will not say!—yet will I put you to death, sir, as unscrupulously as I have brained that venomous serpent lying behind us now! My eye shall be upon you, my hand upon your throat, my weapon at your head, and as there is a God in heaven, let me but see the first sign of treachery

toward that great man, and you die like a dog in your tracks, even though I have to smite you down at the feet of Bertha Travis herself."

A warm flush passed over the whole face of Travis; but he replied frankly:—

"And you would be right, sir! As there is a God in heaven, my purpose is honest. I deal in good faith with you. *He* shall come to no harm. No! Major Sinclair, if on *your* account only—he shall be safe at my hands. Ah! sir—if you would only suffer me to say that, regarding you as one who is so precious to my child, your honor is as dear to me as hers!"

"Enough, sir! *I* am willing to believe you. I have shown this in the pledges I have made for you. But we have so much at stake—so much depends upon the safety of that one man's life, in the present crisis of our fortunes—that the most confiding nature will feel misgivings. Forgive me that I have felt it due to myself to utter threats and warnings which must be offensive. I will utter no more. We understand each other."

Travis grasped his hand. They sat for some minutes both in profound silence. At length—

"When shall we have this meeting?" inquired Travis. "The sooner the better. Inglehardt has pushed me to a certain extremity. If not relieved within three weeks, Bertha must become his wife."

"Ha! Bertha his wife! Never! never!"

"Amen!—God knows I would sooner make any sacrifice to prevent such a marriage. But it is to this meeting that I must look for safety."

"Within *three days* you shall have it—here, at Holly-Dale and Heaven speed it to fortunate issues! You must confide, Mr. Travis, in the simple words of the person you will meet! Do not you be too suspicious, too exacting! He is not the man with whom to drive a bargain. Unfold yourself—deliver yourself frankly, and leave it to his magnanimity to afford you even more than you desire in return. These papers!—you have them safe against possibility of loss."

"Safe as the grave! They shall be forthcoming—all! But how shall we communicate?"

"Leave that to me! I shall contrive it. I may send you a

messenger. He shall utter but a single word to you, which shall prove his authority to communicate. That word is——"

The sentence was finished in a whisper.

"Very good," said the other—"and now, Major Sinclair, will you give us any time at Holly-Dale?"

"Perhaps!" with a slight smile. "But it will be well that *you* should know nothing of my visits. It will make it easier for you to deny that I have been at your plantation. You will need to keep up appearances with Inglehardt. See him every day, if possible. Play your game out with him fearlessly He is one of those subtle scoundrels, full of trick and manœuvre, whom nothing can baffle but an open game. How many men has he at the village?"

"Less than twenty, I think, and all raw recruits. You might crack all their crowns, and capture him at a dash, with a small company."

"Ay, I might! But the attempt might peril our present object—occasion alarm—and bring down the British upon us. They are rapidly moving down from Ninety-Six. We must risk nothing now unnecessarily. It may be well, too, were you to prepare your family for sudden flight across the Santee. If Inglehardt becomes troublesome, the region will be safe for neither you nor them as soon as the British army moves into the precinct. They will probably take post at the village, and Greene will push them if he can. Judge for yourself what your danger will be, if Inglehardt gets any inkling of your present course. He is pressing you, you say. That proves him suspicious already. Take warning, and be prepared, as soon as you are threatened, to send your family off, and bury your negroes in the swamp. Are you doubtful of any of them? Inglehardt is the very man to employ your domestics as spies upon you."

The other answered gravely—

"I have sometimes thought of that, and feared it; for it is difficult, otherwise, to account for the information that he sometimes obtains. I visited your father sometime ago, and took every precaution, and a circuitous route, in seeking the Barony; yet, though laid up with his wound at the time, Inglehardt knew it all."

"Be heedful of this danger. Your domestics must be watched narrowly. It is because I doubt *them*, that I would not willingly be seen at Holly-Dale. Besides, I believe myself to be tracked by an enemy's scout."

"Who?"

"Hell-fire Dick, and perhaps others of his gang."

"Why, Dick is, or was, one of Inglehardt's own troop; but he deserted and went over to General Marion."

"From whom he has also deserted—by whom he is outlawed."

"And you think him on *your* track?"

"It is probable! I have thrown him out, I believe; but, of these things, one can not be certain. At all events, I change my quarter nightly, and always keep ahead, using the running water, as frequently as I can, for washing my horse's hoofs. I shall cross the river to night."

"Have you any support at hand?"

"I think so. To-night will determine."

Much more was said between the parties, dealing with the details of their respective progresses; but these need not delay us in ours. The two separated toward dusk, having adjusted their more important objects, but engaged to meet, at about the same time next day, in the same neighborhood.

When fairly dark, Sinclair ventured upon a doubtful ford across the river, which, as the water was low, enabled him to pass without difficulty. On the other side, knowing his route thoroughly, he made his way upward, some two miles, and, having reached a certain designated spot, he wound his bugle, and was delighted to hear an answering blast, only a few moments after. Is was not long before he was joined by 'Bram, his faithful negro.

'Bram had a long story to tell of *his* own progress, and that of Jim Ballou, portions of which we are already in possession of. For the rest, we may briefly state that "Hell-fire Dick" had kept the track of Sinclair unerringly, until Turkey Hill was reached; when, somehow, the hounds were at fault, thrown out by a nice little bit of practice which the partisan had indulged in. Whether the scouts had recovered the trail, the negro could not say, nor could he report where they were

Jim Ballou had kept him at watch upon Holly-Dale, to which he crossed in the morning, recrossing again at night. Ballou himself was still off scouting somewhere.

After a long and satisfactory conference with the negro, Sinclair followed him down to the river, where he found a canoe which 'Bram had appropriated from a neighboring plantation. Leaving the latter to stable his horse in the swamp thickets for the present, our major of dragoons paddled himself across the river, to the "Holly-Dale" tract which lay directly opposite.

He had been expected. Bertha Travis and her brother, Henry, welcomed him at the landing.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SCENES AT HOLLY-DALE.

"'Twas my desire to prepare you for
The entertainment. Be but pleased to obscure
Yourself behind these hangings a few minutes."

CHAPMAN AND SHIRLEY.

Our little group of three seated themselves on the river bluff, Henry Travis sitting at the feet of the lovers, and Bertha's hand grasped by that of Sinclair. Very sweet was the situation to all the parties. The night air was soft and pleasantly cool, coming up from the river. The stream swept by, darkly bright, with a gentle murmur as it went, chafing against roots of cypress, and bending branches of oak and willow, that trailed down into the water. There was no moon yet, but the stars were shining gayly and numerously down, their pale gleams dropping about the group through the great roof of trees under which they sat, and which crowned the little promontory, even where it overhung the river.

That silly sweet prattle of lovers! How idle to shrewish ears! That enumeration of little ridiculous dreams and hopes, so childishly little, when heard by third persons, which amply satisfy the minds of the interested parties, no matter how wise. For love is verily a little child—so full of faith, so full of wisdom in its simplicity, finding so much of compensation in its life of trifles; finding life itself so busy and full of work, even when given up to the most unperforming revery. We will not seek to repeat the little nothings of which its speech is so full, assured that the situation is sufficiently satisfactory, though the speech be silly.

Willie Sinclair, strong man as he is; man of thought and action, purpose and performance; honest patriot and brave

partisan; he, too, like the lovely creature with whose fingers his own paddled, could have dreamed away the livelong night in the pleasant commerce, but that there was that stern monitor called duty at his elbow, which kept up a continual undersong of exhortation, muttering in his ears at every period—

"This is no *time*
To play with mammets and to tilt with lips."

He started up, at length, impetuously, and with the air of one desperately shaking himself free from a pleasant thraldom.

"Bertha, I must away. I have work before me of a pressing sort. I must get writing materials. I have to despatch 'Bram on a mission within an hour. Can I get to the house unseen, where I may write a letter?"

"Why must you hurry, Willie? I thought you had a little respite now."

This was said reproachfully.

"Faith, so I said—and truly, a very little respite. But a single hour with you, Bertha, is a very precious blessing in a jewel's compass. I must be content with just so little, now, in order that we may secure a longer time hereafter. But the business now is pressing."

"You are always so eager to begone, Willie."

"Ah! you are so jealous, Bertha. But it does not vex me that you are so."

And he laughed and caught her in his arms, and kissed her, and she pouted prettily.

"Kiss her again, major," said Henry,—"I'm sure she rather likes it, though she does push you off and grumble."

And the boy clapped his hands at the result of his suggestion, Sinclair dutifully doing as he was bidden, and getting soundly slapped for his offence. Bertha Travis was, you see, something of a rustic, and knew not exactly how to resist an impertinence, which came in disguise of a tribute.

"You see what I've got for listening to you."

"I reckon, major, you'd risk the slap over and over again for the kiss. But I wouldn't."

"Hush, you!" said the sister; "your impudence grows faster than your shoulders. But, Willie, must you be going?"

"I must: but I need first the materials for writing a letter. It is your father's business, Bertha, rather than mine. Now, dearest, if I could make my way to the house, unseen by the servants, slip into your father's office, and write a letter—"

"It can be done. Henry can go before and whistle to you if all's clear. We can steal round the kitchen, under cover of the garden-wall, which is shady with evergreens, and the office is in the basement. And mother wants to see you, Willie. She can come down to you in the office."

"Yes—to be sure: but do not let your father know that I am there. Not that he will not know—at least suspect—and approve; but that he must not be burdened with an unnecessary fact, about which he may hereafter be questioned by that arch rascal Inglehardt."

It was arranged that Henry Travis should go ahead, and see that the land was clear, while the two followed slowly after. His whistle was the signal to time their paces and regulate their course. The boy was already something of a woodsman and scout, and delighted at every sort of employment which exercised his faculty. He stretched away as soon as apprized of what he was to do. How the lovers loitered on, hand in hand, whispering what grateful nonsense, we may conjecture. Enough to report their arrival beneath the shadow of the dwelling, in the right basement of which Travis kept his office. A door opened upon the yard in the rear of the office, and here Henry stood and gave them admission, closing the entrance after them. A tallow (*dipped*) candle burned upon the table, which was covered with books and papers. Travis was a reader of books, of which he had a tolerable English collection of that day, some of them standards even to ours. He was a busy man, too, as a British commissariat, and hence a multitude of papers, calculations, memoranda, reports, &c. He was up stairs, companioning his wife. When Henry came to his father for the key of his office, the latter was about to ask him for what he wished it—as the application was somewhat unusual—but with the promptness of an older wit, the boy anticipated him:—

"Don't ask me any questions, papa. You know I shall not do any mischief."

The father in a moment suspected the nature of his secret The mother asked:—

"Where's your sister, Henry?"

He looked at her significantly, and said:—

"She's at the office door outside, waiting for me to open for her."

The father instantly handed the key to the boy, who, snatching up the only candle burning in the hall, hurried down to let in the two lovers, leaving his excellent parents in the dark.

"The thoughtless scamp!" said the father.

The mother said:—

"Never mind the light. We can talk as well in the dark as with the candle. Have you any idea what he's after, Travis?"

"Yes!"

"Ah!—are all things going right, my husband?"

"I hope so. They promise well! They are in a fair train for it."

"Heaven speed it—and send us out of this painful bondage. I trust we shall never again be cursed with the sight of Richard Inglehardt."

"That we can hardly hope for, my dear—certainly, we must endure it a little while longer; but I hope not too long. We shall probably see him again, and we must keep up appearances, Lucy, until we are able to bid him defiance."

"You are of course aware that Sinclair is in the neighborhood—has been on the plantation?"

"Yes; but the less I know of this the better. I suspect that he is below at this very moment, but I would not willingly be assured of it. You may ascertain if you will, but tell me nothing of it. I suppose that Bertha will let you know anon."

At that moment the girl's steps were heard coming through the passage-way, a flight of stairs leading up from the basement through the centre of the building. She found her way to her mother in the dark, and whispered in her ears. Then she lighted a candle.

"Bertha," said the father—"have the windows of the office been securely shut in for the night?"

The precaution had been taken by Sinclair, to have this done before he entered. Meanwhile, Mrs. Travis rose, and with her daughter went to the pantry.

"I'll venture anything, Bertha, you never thought of giving him any supper."

"Indeed, mother, I did not."

"As if love was sufficient support for a major of dragoons. I think it just as likely as not, the poor fellow hasn't had a mouthful for twenty-four hours."

Bertha was full of regrets and self-reproaches.

"Never mind, you shall amend your fault. Get out the ham; there's some johnny-cake put up; and the fish Henry caught to-day are fried and in the safe. Step out and bring them in. Your father can go off to bed, and we'll bring the major in here. He can take his supper in the pantry. Have everything ready, while I step down and have a talk with him. You've had him to yourself long enough."

Meanwhile, our major of dragoons, had written out his despatches, whatever they were. He had just finished, and sealed them, when Mrs. Travis joined him in the office. When she appeared, and pronounced his name, he started up, and, with as natural a grace and ease, as if he had done the thing repeatedly before, he threw his arms about the matron's neck, and inflicted a smart kiss upon her lips.

"Bless me, Major Sinclair," said the lady, recovering from the salute—"It is well Bertha does not see you—she might take it amiss."

"But Bertha *does* see you, you wicked couple," cried the girl, making her appearance at the same moment; "you erred, mother, in leaving me so little to do up-stairs."

"Well, major, since we are so closely watched, you will see that you time your kisses more seasonably, and when there shall be no jealous eyes upon us."

"Ah! my dear Mrs. Travis—mother that is to be—we might apprehend from Bertha's jealousy were she to be utterly shared out."

"What! you don't mean to say that you are in the habit of kissing my daughter—Bertha!"

"Tie! Willie! You know that such a thing happens very rarely."

"A major of dragoons," said the mother shrewdly, "is certainly the last person in the world to indulge in such a pre-

tice, except as mere matter of duty. But now that we have all had our kisses, I propose, Major Sinclair, that you step up to the pantry, and take a little cold supper. I fancy that you get as little good food now-a-days as kisses. Bertha has got together everything in the house that is eatable."

"Ah! she is thoughtful of me. I confess to an appetite."

"Oh!" said the girl with a blush—"it is mother who has been considerate. I confess I never once thought of your mere mortal appetites."

"While feeding on my heart you never felt for my hunger."

"What a superb Spanish sort of speech. But come up, and eat."

"Where's Mr. Travis?"

"He will not be in the way."

"The appeal is irresistible. I confess that I am one of that class of lovers, who never lose appetite. A sigh never relieves my hunger. The recollection of my lady's eyes rarely moves me to an indifference for food;—even a kiss, dear Bertha, never lessens my taste for ham and eggs, chickens and salad. I will look into your pantry with a will. But I have little time for pleasures of this sort, and I must swallow as fiercely as an Edisto raftsman. I must be across the river again in an hour."

"So soon, Willie?"

"Yes; my business will admit of no delay. I must send 'Bram on a journey to-night. Where's Henry?"

The boy answered from the outside of the door.

"Run down, Henry, to the landing and wind this bugle, three short *mots*, and then come back. This will bring 'Bram down to the river, where he will wait me. And now for the cold meats."

The boy sped on his errand, and the rest of the party adjourned up-stairs to the pantry, where Bertha had spread out everything with the natural nicety with which a damsel does everything for her lover. There was the ham, not over-deeply cut into, there the dish of perch, cold but very appetizing, there were some fragments of chicken; a plate of corn *johnny*-cake; a tray of pickles, cucumbers and melons;—and a decanter of old Jamaica.

"If you would wait a while, major, till we could get you a bowl of coffee—"

"Not for the world, my dear Mrs. Travis—all this suffices, amply—meets all my desires—and I frankly confess to you that my hunger was beginning to rage. It is not often that I see so good a table, and recently, I have eaten little—nothing half so good since I have been on the Edisto. A *snack* at Kit Rowe's did but whet and stimulate the appetite which has had no supply since."

Willie Sinclair had no affectations. His was one of those hearty, whole-souled spontaneous natures, which frankly deliver their true characteristics—having no strategic tendencies in morals—few or no reserves in respect to their own moods—simply because there is no secret consciousness perpetually prompting concealment. He slashed away at the ham, tore the chicken asunder, swallowed pickle after pickle, as men of sanguine temperament are apt to do, and washed down his edibles with a copious draught of Jamaica, and this without mincing the matter, without any delicate hesitation, and scrupulous nicety because of the presence of his mistress. And, we do not scruple to say further—we have no desire for any peevish suppression of the truth, in deference to canting delicacy—and therefore state frankly that Bertha Travis herself was persuaded to take the wing of a chicken between the fingers of one hand and a fragment of johnny-cake in the other, and, for a part of the time at least, to keep her lover company in his pleasant performances. And we give it as our sober opinion, that love—happy love we mean—always begets an appetite—i. e., among all sensible and Christian people!

Suddenly, even while Sinclair ate and prattled with the ladies, the sound of horses' feet was heard in the court below; and Henry Travis dashed into the apartment crying:—

"To cover, Major Willie, there are troopers without, all in armor."

"I have not finished!" quoth Sinclair, coolly snatching up the ham-bone and the bottle of Jamaica, and, chewing as he went, he followed Bertha down stairs into the office, while Henry Travis proceeded to open for the strangers whose raps were now audible at the entrance.

And who were these unexpected visiters but Richard Inglehardt and a portion of his crew?

That subtle engineer, who had not for some time seen Mistress Bertha Travis, had suddenly bethought him that he might wisely put himself in the way of Fortune, having put such a spoke into her wheel during his late negotiations with Captain Travis. At all events, he had resolved to make a sudden visit to see how his schemes had worked—to see if he could, by close deciphering of the faces of the damsel and her father, ascertain the effect upon her of the communications of the latter. Had he communicated the arrangement made between themselves? How had she received it? Was she resigned to her fate, and would these three allowed weeks find him at the close the master of it? No wonder he was curious. The maiden was a rare prize, and he hungered for its possession. We may add that, never wholly assured of the father's good faith, he was not quite free from a lurking suspicion that nothing had as yet been done. His purpose was threefold—to take in a draught of beauty at the eyes, in anticipation of his future hopes—to see for himself if there had been any progress in the matter—and to goad the reluctant Travis to the performance of his hateful task. Satisfied that the father held it to be a hateful task, he could readily believe that he would work at it very slowly. It was, perhaps, just as well that he should be made to feel the spur in his sides.

Never for a moment did Richard Inglehardt suppose that, just when he rode up to the dwelling, his lucky rival was at full feast, of eyes and mouth in the pantry, with the lady of his love.

Captain Travis, though he had left the field to Sinclair, and retired to his chamber, had, fortunately, not retired for the night. He had heard the sounds of the troopers as soon as Henry Travis, and made his way down stairs, not a little anxious, in season to welcome Inglehardt at the entrance. That subtle swordfish came in alone, having left his troopers, who were simply rough-riding rangers, to keep watch in the court below, and cool their restiffness by the contemplation of the quiet stars, always supposing that such people may occasionally incline to look upward.

Of course, Captain Travis was courtlily gracious, and in civil terms enough welcomed his unwelcome visiter. They entered the

parlor together, where they found good Mrs. Travis, sitting calmly in her rustic rocker, made of oak-staves, with a square of undressed oxhide stretched across the seat, the mottled hair, white and black, outside. And she was civil enough in her welcome; and Inglehardt had no reason to complain. He thought the old lady rather stiff and stately in her reception, but this might be due to the uneasy working of the hinges of age—the stiffness might be in the joints rather than the soul; though he confessed to himself, while only forming this supposition, that, at no period, could he have flattered himself with the belief that the good lady had ever shown herself cordial in her deportment, while in his presence.

Whatever Inglehardt thought or felt, he never suffered himself to lose the quiet, easy, subdued, deliberate, and very gracious manner which usually characterised his bearing. His genuflexions were profound and graceful, his smile the most benignant, and when he took the lady's hand, and inquired after her well-being, it was with the air of a dutiful and devoted son, all reverence and solicitude; and taking his seat beside her, he drew his box from one pocket, fed his nostril gingerly—followed the feeding by the use of his kerchief—a genuine "Injy," which he drew from the other, restored both to their places again, and renewed his remark, with singularly sweet *empressement*, upon the admirable keeping in which he found his amiable hostess.

But Bertha Travis was nowhere to be seen. He sweetly insinuated his wishes for her health—which were construed naturally into an inquiry for her presence—and was told that she had retired for the night—the hour was late—no guests were expected;—Captain Travis, by the latter remark, meaning to convey the idea that, could it have been foreseen that the house was to be honored with the presence of so distinguished a visiter, the damsel would not have disappeared so early. And with this pleasant insinuation, Master Inglehardt was compelled to be content. And the conversation flagged.

After a-while, Captain Inglehardt, apologizing sweetly to Mrs. Travis, begged to see her spouse on public business, in private, and in his office. Travis, without knowing how Sinclair had been disposed of, and feeling not a little anxious for

the subject, was yet unable to evade this requisition. His wife would have retired, giving up the parlor to her guest and husband; but this Inglehardt would by no means permit; and Travis had no ready subterfuge by which to escape the necessity of taking his visiter, down stairs, "on public business," to that office whither it had been always usual with them to go on such occasions. So, seizing a candle, almost desperately, and making as much bustle as he well could, without exciting suspicion, he led the way for the unwelcome guest.

The office was wholly in darkness. All was silent there. Where was Sinclair? was the mental query of Travis. Had he got off in the face of the troopers without? If not, where could he be? There was a rude settee in the apartment upon which Inglehardt subsided with an air of graceful negligence. Could Sinclair have been forced to take shelter, under the *form* which sustained his enemy? If so, Travis felt for the mortifications of the man whose proud spirit he knew, and whom he desired for his son-in-law! But, casting an anxious glance about the room, the father of Bertha caught a glimpse of the door, ajar, which opened into a closet occupying that portion of the passage way, which lay beneath the stairflight into the second story. If not gone, he felt it probable that our major of dragoons was sheltered there amidst wines and liquors, and any number of demijohns and bottles. These, he remembered, crowded the shelves to the very edges, and covered the floor, leaving precious little space for the movements of a restless person. Our commissary felt exceedingly uneasy. A single incautious movement, of the occupant, if concealed there, might tumble a dozen bottles from their spheres, and he might be witness to some such scene as that in which Hamlet administers to Polonius through the arras. Travis was half disposed to think that Inglehardt's visit, so late, so unexpected, was only made in consequence of his suspicions. Had he been furnished with any clues? had the spies upon his steps, of whom Sinclair had spoken, followed the trail to his dwelling? Had the espionage which he had long felt to be maintained upon himself, made and reported the discovery of Sinclair's presence? Well might he be anxious. His secret—nay, his fate, hung upon a single hair.

But Travis was an old soldier, and a pretty cool politician. Whatever he felt, he yet contrived to appear perfectly unconcerned and indifferent.

"Well, Inglehardt," he said, with an air of frankness, "you have news, I'm sure. You are not the man to ride at night without a burden. What have you heard?"

The other answered gently and slowly.

"Nay," said he, "will you not credit me with the anxious feeling of a lover who would gaze occasionally upon the beautiful star which is to crown his destiny? Is it not enough that my star is the jewel of your house?"

"Pshaw! You are not the person to fatigue yourself with love-making. I know you too well for that. What are your tidings?"

"Faith, but you do me wrong, my dear captain. Sentiment is my infirmity. Love is my weakness. The eagerness of my passion alone compels me here, and I feel a signal disappointment in not being able to see the creature of my devotions. Verily, you might have expected me. After our conference, in which I showed you fully the intensity of my passion, you could scarcely have expected me to keep away. Ah!—do tell me what progress you have made?"

The other answered bluntly and truly:—

"None as yet! I have not even broached the subject to wife or daughter. I felt too much like a coward. I had not the courage for it. It is not an agreeable duty, Captain Inglehardt, to repeat to their ears, the terrible language you have thrust into mine."

"Ah!—but it must be done, Captain Travis!" said the other, with a contemptuous coolness, and he took snuff after the speech.

"Ay! Of course! It must be done; but though I know this, I do not the less feel how painful is the necessity. And it *shall* be done, Captain Inglehardt. You have my promise, but you must leave it to me to decide the when and the how. I must seize a favorable moment for it. I have three weeks remember."

"Less some thirty-six hours! I will not bate one moment of the limit."

"I know you for a terrible tyrant, as I have told you, and, by Heaven, Inglehardt, if I saw any way to escape you, I should a thousand times prefer to defy you to the teeth, than sacrifice that dear child to your desires."

"Sacrifice! Pooh! pooh! Travis;—what silly, inappropriate words you use. How should there be any sacrifice? Your safety is something, and I flatter myself that I am as proper a person to render your daughter happy as any captain you could find. But you desire, possibly, a higher rank for your son-in-law. Well, our union of forces will secure that also. We shall see. Though I care nothing for the distinction myself, yet, to satisfy you, I shall put myself in the way of a colonelcy."

"Do *that!*" said Travis with energy.

"Well—it shall be done."

"But your news? You have had some intelligence?"

"Y-e-s!" drawlingly, "we are to have three more regiments from Ireland; Cornwallis is to return from Virginia, bringing Arnold with him, and we shall finish the rebels at a blow in Georgia and the Carolinas. It needs but this to bring about negotiations for peace. Congress is worn out, and prepared to make terms for the Northern Colonies, giving up the Carolinas and Georgia, which, with Florida and the Southwest territory, will leave the Crown in possession of the richest of its provinces—worth all the rest to her commerce. There! Isn't that a plentiful budget?"

"If true! But how do you get it?"

"From Charleston. It comes from a sure hand. It comprises Balfour's latest intelligence."

"Heaven send it to be true! Yet, will Great Britain be willing to yield so much to Congress, with the certainty of continual insurrection here, stimulated by a republic alongside."

"There will be no insurrection here. It is to be a war of extermination waged upon the rebels, till the whole race is extinct. The conquerers will be put in possession, and a new plan of colonization will fill up the vacant places with the loyal people. You perceive a sufficient motive in the prospect for present and future fidelity."

"I have never wanted motive for this."

"To be sure not," said the other with a smile, which was a

sneer. "At all events, this intelligence will furnish sufficient motive for sundry who are shaking in the wind, deceived by the apparent successes of the rebel partisans."

"Very true," said the other musingly.

Travis was not deceived by this intelligence. He not only knew it to be an invention — a lie throughout — but he knew it to be the invention of Inglehardt himself. Travis, who had his own emissaries in the village, knew that, unless within the last eight hours, Inglehardt had received no such intelligence up to their last interview. Carelessly insinuating the question as to the period when he got his despatches, Inglehardt inadvertently answered — "This morning." The other said no more. The conversation became desultory, and finally flagged, both parties beginning to show decided symptoms of weariness.

"I must ride," at length said Inglehardt. "A stoup of your Jamaica, Travis; this day's work has enfeebled me."

The requisition filled Travis once more with uneasiness. It was one which Inglehardt rarely made. Could he have any suspicions of that closet beneath the stairs? He knew that it was there the liquors were kept. But there were no means of evasion. Any hesitation, or delay, would probably confirm the suspicions of the other if any were entertained; and Travis rose promptly and proceeded to the closet, the door of which he opened carefully and no wider than was necessary for the admission of his person. Judge of his momentary consternation when he discovered not only the major of dragoons, but Bertha Travis, within its shelter; his movement, on opening the door — which opened within — having the effect of forcing them into the closest relations. As he entered, Bertha thrust the square black-bottle — in which the Jamaica of that day was usually found most portable — into his grasp. He was saved the trouble of finding it. He withdrew with it promptly, drawing the door closely behind him. But now, another dilemma awaited him. He had the rum, and the tumblers, and these were planted upon the table near the unwelcome guest; but the water was above stairs. To leave Inglehardt alone, even for a moment, was a peril. His papers were strewn about the table. He rapidly asked himself whether there was anything in them to compromise him. A tricky politician never feels

himself quite safe. He knew that Inglehardt had as few scruples as himself, and, then, he might take it into his head to look into the closet. But he had no escape from this new necessity, and, groaning in spirit as he went, he hurried upstairs for the water.

Sinclair readily conceived all the dangers of his own situation as certainly as did Travis; but he got his *couteau de chasse* in readiness, and felt that even strife would be a grateful relief from a position, in which, though with an arm about his beloved, he had stiffened from constraint. He had shifted the burden of his body from one leg to the other, until both were weary. And he weighed little short of two hundred. But Inglehardt never looked at the closet. He, however, did not hesitate at a rapid glance at the papers on the table, which only ceased as he heard Travis approaching from above.

"The dirty rascal!" muttered Sinclair to himself, as through the crack of the door he witnessed the transaction. The next moment Travis made his appearance, and the two drank together, the potation of Travis rendered necessary from the excitement he felt, exceeding thrice in quantity that taken by his companion. Then, slowly, to the last, Inglehardt took his departure, Travis carefully seeing him beyond the dwelling, and to his horse.

"What a tedious scoundrel!" exclaimed Sinclair, emerging from the closet, and leading out Bertha. "Cold and conceited, isn't it wonderful that such a fellow should have any of the qualities of the soldier? Yet he has: he can plan well; is cunningly clever, and prompt enough to blows on most occasions; but he lacks one warlike essential—one of the most essential for a dragoon. He is wanting in impulse; is deficient in celerity. What a lover he must be—eh, Bertha? Did he take snuff between the sentences when he was making love to you?"

"Ah! he never got so far as that."

"A snake in the grass! Subtle, sly, venomous, and deliberate. I am curious to think how the encounter between us shall take place. I know that it *will* come—but how? Heaven speed it be in the open daylight, in the broad field, with Heaven looking on; and, if Heaven pleases, with no other spectators. I should dread that he should creep near me in the darkness,

while I slept, sheltering his sliding, spotty carcass under innocent leaves and flowers."

Travis reappeared.

"Is the coast clear, sir?" asked Sinclair.

He was answered by Henry Travis, who hastily reappeared.

"All right, Major Willie—they're out of the avenue by this time."

"What! not a-bed, boy?" said the father. "And what have you got here?—my pistols, as I live! Are they loaded, boy?"

"To the muzzle, sir. I thought they had found out the major, and that I might have to take a crack at 'em."

"'Faith, Captain Travis, I shall have to ask you for both your children," said Sinclair, lifting the boy up in his muscular arms, and kissing him.

"Don't be jealous, Bertha," said the saucy urchin—"you shall have it as soon as he's gone."

"I shan't wait for that, saucebox," said the girl, slapping him on one cheek, while kissing the other. Sinclair announced the necessity for his immediate departure, and took Bertha by the hand. Her father felt a sudden impulse to examine his papers; and, during this study, our major atoned, upon *her* lips, for the outrage committed upon her brother's. Then she slipped out of the room and up-stairs without rousing a single echo; and, if she slept without dreaming that night, it was not because of the absence of very pleasant fancies. A parting stoup of the Jamaica was hastily swallowed by our dragoon, and he disappeared—a few words as he left being sufficient to establish an understanding between himself and Travis, for future meeting. Henry *would* go with him down to the river and see him across in the boat. The boy would have given his favorite pony to have been permitted to cross also. In another hour, Sinclair had despatched, by Abram, the missive which he had encountered so much risk to prepare. Of course, the black was properly schooled in his duties, and perfectly understood what was to be done. His task implied a canter of ten or twelve miles that night.

"But where is Ballou?" was Sinclair's query to himself, as he prepared to occupy the forest-camp of the negro, his good steed being his only companion. "The fellow must be very

busy—on a warm trail—or—which is most likely—must be drunk again!"

But our major was quite too tired for much reflection, and soon delivered himself up to sleep. We must not omit to state that he had not sent 'Bram off without his supper, having brought with him the ham-bone and bread which he had so hastily appropriated, from the pantry of Mrs. Travis, when the alarm was given by the steeds of Inglehardt and his party.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE RIVAL SPIDERS.

"Things well begun
Are half performed: the managing an act
With close and hidden practice, 'mongst the wise
And politic people, brings assured success:
Broad open way the heavy snail doth take,
While untrod paths best please the subtle snake."

GLASSTHORNE'S *Wallenstein*.

It was long after midnight when 'Bram returned to his master in the camp. But he had performed his mission successfully, and brought back a written answer, partly in cipher, which Sinclair read by firelight, and which proved satisfactory.

"But what of Ballou, 'Bram?"

The negro could give no account of the scout.

"'Speck he 'tretch out somewhay in de bush, drunk like a gempleman."

Our major painfully admitted to himself this probability; he well knew the scout's weakness, and feared that he had fallen into a temptation which had proved too great for his resolves.

"And lawd, mausse, ef you bin yerry how he sway to God nebber for touch whiskey an' rum any more 'gen. But he lub 'em so."

"Well, since he fails us, 'Bram, we shall only have to do double duty ourselves. Don't let me sleep a moment after daylight. I must ride down to Kit Rowe's by peep of day. To sleep now, old fellow."

With dawn he was up and mounted.

"Keep your eyes about you, 'Bram, while I am absent. You can push the boat across the river and scout about Holly-Dale. Henry Travis will meet you by the swamp cedars, and bring

you something to eat. I shall probably be with you after dark in the camp, mind you. We can cross in the canoe."

And shaking the negro's hand, as if he had been a bosom friend, our major of dragoons took his way down along the edge of the river swamp, until he reached the ford where he had previously crossed the stream, when he boldly pressed through it as before. On the opposite side he sped along with a free rein, meeting nobody, and possibly escaping all eyes, at that early hour of the morning. But he kept under cover as much as possible, passing below the bridge until he found himself nearly opposite to Rowe's plantation. Here, after a little search, he found, closely hidden away in the thickly-massed forest which crowded down to the edge of the stream, a little dug-out, with a negro boy in it asleep. He routed up the urchin, who was evidently set to wait for him—not watch—and stripping his horse of his saddle, and loosing his neck-chain, he led the steed by the bridle to the water, and entering the boat, bade the boy push across; the horse, never fearing, taking the water like a dog of Newfoundland, and swimming beside the dug-out. The steed concealed in the swamp thickets, and the boy left in charge of the boat, Sinclair, after sundry precautions, made his way up toward the settlement, giving his bugle a slight blast which brought Rowe out to him in the thicket.

"Have you heard of Dick Coulter and his troop?" was the first question of Sinclair.

"He was at Chevillette's last night, and is no doubt plying about in the swamp between his place and Barton's."

"Good! I must have him up to-morrow by three o'clock in the afternoon. Can you give him a whistle?"

"It shall be done. Where must he find cover?"

"At Holly-Dale, west of the road, out of sight, but ready bitted, for a charge at the first blast of the bugle. Has anything more been gathered touching the recruits of Travis?"

"I counted twenty-six at drill, yesterday."

"How many has Coulter?"

"Not more than nineteen last night, but some were out scouting."

"Has Ballou been here?"

"No! I thought I heard his horn blow down by the negro

quarter last evening, as I rode up from Chevillette's, but I have seen nothing of him."

"He is either drunk in a hollow, or on a hot trail. I need him now, and we shall be pushed for time. Greene's advance will probably pass Rawdon to-morrow night."

"Ah! and his lordship?"

"Is making for Orangeburg as a fox makes for his hole with thirty dogs at his heels. The heat is playing old Harry with his men, and his Irish are ready to break out in mutiny."

"Good! What of Stewart and Cruger?"

"Nothing positive: but they are on the road also, pushing downward with the whole tory settlement of Ninety-Six, bag and baggage along with him, and Pickens at his heels with his mounted rangers—too few to cut him up, yet too hungry not to follow. But you must get me some breakfast out here. I have a famous dragoon appetite this morning."

"There's no stranger on the place or about. Can't you venture up to the house."

"No! I can risk nothing unnecessarily now—I have a life depending on my vigilance and safety, which is worth an army to us."

We will not pursue our major of dragoons for the present, satisfied that he wishes concealment, and that he will be active. Let us look in, for a moment, upon Richard Inglehardt.

He was taking his breakfast, a somewhat late one, at the table of the widow Bruce. All the other lodgers—they were few—had breakfasted and gone. The widow presided at the table and watched her guest, as, somewhat more abstractedly than usual, he broke his bread and sipped his coffee. Inglehardt seldom showed himself in a contemplative mood; but he was evidently somewhat heedless of the lady's presence at this moment. Mrs. Bruce was a lady of dignity, stately and reserved, herself, but with that sort of pride which demands that others shall pay tribute of confidence and solicitude. She did not much admire Inglehardt. She knew him as obscure of family, the son of an overseer, and he a man of little force of character. But Inglehardt *had made himself*, and this proved him in possession of native endowments which, properly exercised, would give him means of power, and moral power is *per*

se a virtue. Richard Inglehardt was not a person to be despised—not a person, however, to be loved—by the Widow Bruce he was not even admired. Did she fear him? not exactly. It would be difficult to say through what agency he coerced her respect. It was not a respect accorded to him through any social consideration. His social position was doubtful and his manners were bad. But even his manners were significant of latent powers. He was so cool—so assured—so seemingly indifferent as to the results of the game—so equal to it, as it was ordinarily played—that those who could not analyze the source of the possession were yet able to recognise it. It was something, therefore, to inspire curiosity, to perceive this man apparently forgetful, absorbed, heedless of the things around him, and, for once, *natural*, and so far *human*, therefore, as to betray a consciousness of such relations with the world about him, as to take him completely out of his indifference. He whose thoughts make him forgetful of the absolute presence in which he stands, shows himself in some degree the subject of fortune. He is not superior to fate. It is working in his brain, or in his heart, so as to inspire a care—an anxiety.

Why should Richard Inglehardt be so anxious at the present moment, as to forget his affectations—forget his usual manner, and show himself heedless of the very person in whose presence he sits? Such a man rarely betrays any heedlessness of those about him. He is always watchful of the world as if he knows that it is full of enemies or—victims. It is only those who sympathize with humanity who ever forget their vigilance.

"I should say, Captain Inglehardt," quoth the widow, "that you were meditating some enterprise of more than usual difficulty."

There was something of pique in the tone of the lady, the fruit, perhaps, of his failure to note her presence.

"Did you speak, Mrs. Bruce?" he answered, somewhat quickly, but looking up still absently.

"Is it love or war, Captain Inglehardt?"

"Love, madam!"

"Ay, sir; I ask if it be love or war that now exercises your strategic faculties? You are evidently busy in some scheme of more than common embarrassment."

He shook his head as if to shake it free of thought, and answered slowly, resuming his deliberateness of speech and manner.

"Yes, madam, I am to sup shortly with the devil, and my spoon is not quite long enough for my purposes."

And with these words he coolly rose and left the room, a little vexed with himself that he should forget himself, in his anxieties, in the presence of another.

"Ay," said the widow, "be it war or love, the devil will be sure to have his hand in your mess, no matter whom you have at supper."

The widow did not admire her lodger certainly;—and had but little faith in his virtues, though she might respect his powers. Meanwhile, Inglehardt retired to his room, and lighting his pipe, sought, through this medium, to blow the clouds from off his brain. He is not one who suffers himself often to soliloquise; but he needs a safety-valve at this moment which the pipe itself will not supply, and he broods aloud, without heeding that we listen.

"I feel dubious about this whole affair. I feel that Travis is playing the rogue with me. I do not *know* it, I only *feel* it; it is an instinct; and I hate to rely upon instinct merely. I can not fathom the secret. I have those who watch him yet they report nothing unfavorable—all seems flowing smoothly, like a river going down to the sea, singing as it goes. Still, there is a something treacherous in the current, and I can not sound its depths.

"Yet what can be his game? He knows, as well as I do, that this rebellion is nearly burnt out. In the northern states, it scarcely shows a flame. Virginia and North Carolina have been swept by Arnold and Cornwallis. Georgia is crushed and helpless at the foot of Britain. Here, only, in our own province is the struggle maintained—and how? Greene is too cold and cautious to achieve any brilliant results. He only keeps alive by economizing his forces. The troops of Marion and Sumter, Pickens and the rest of the partisans—they come and go, and are equal only to small predatory performances. Half of the natives are in our ranks, and here are three new regiments from Ireland, and others coming. One disaster to Greene's army and the war is ended.

"Well, I am in position, and Travis is in position. His policy is to be faithful to the crown and to me. He knows that I can tear him down at a moment—nay, give him to the halter. He has every motive of interest and safety to be faithful, and with such a man such notions are everything. We are both in a position to achieve fortune by the event, and that is as nearly reduced to certainty now, as anything can be in the world.

"And yet—I *feel* that he is treacherous! He does not press this matter with his daughter. He hopes yet to escape this necessity. But how? There is no doubt of my proofs, and he knows me too well to doubt that I will crush him, ay, hang him, without remorse, if he is unfaithful—though Bertha Travis lay at my feet pleading to me for mercy. He knows *that*, yet he trifles with me!

"Shall I submit to this trifling? Why has he not broached the matter to her in the last thirty-six hours, when I laid bare to him the absolute necessity of his case, and deliberately showed him my own stern resolve? He knows what I require, knows me firm, and knows his danger. Wherefore should he trifle, then, and procrastinate, unless in the hope of some method of evasion? Does he calculate on the chapter of accidents, in this three weeks which I have allowed him—calculate on chance shot or sabre stroke cutting me off and assuring his safety by silencing my testimony? Ha! I must let him understand that my very death is his ruin. I must give him to know that I shall so arrange the evidence against him, and place it in such keeping, that the very hour in which I perish gives up the secret to Balfour.

"And what are his sources of hope for these casualties? This Sinclair—where is he? His battalion is *not* with Greene. That is certain. Where is it? He, himself, has been heard of below, as far as Monck's Corner, and Biggins'. A troop of cavalry supposed to be St. Julien's, has been down upon the Pon Pon with Harden. This Edisto boy, Richard Coulter—my old school-mate too—is somewhere below, skirting and recruiting along the river. Can he be in any strength? I must prepare for some of these parties. My own recruits are strong enough now for a dash, and I must have them out scouting. Had I my

veterans here, something handsome might be done. I shall have them in another week—and then!

"But am I safe here another week? Hardly—if it be true that Harden, Maham, St. Julien, Sinclair, and Coulter, are below. It will need that I take to the swamp. Oh! for half-a-dozen scouts who know their business!

"This wooing is not my *forte*. It fatigues me. I require easy conquests with the sex. They do not compensate toil and stratagem. The father must do my wooing. I shall make it a short process with him, and he will find it needful to be quite as summary with her. He shall have his three weeks, but not a moment more. In that space of time, he can not escape me. Yet I must watch him. My instincts are ever sure, and, I feel, though I can not see, that he is treacherous. He has his game no doubt, but I will block it on him when he least expects it."

We are not to suppose that all this soliloquy was delivered as we have written it, without pause, break, or interruption. The mood was almost dreamy in which the captain of loyalists uttered himself, with frequent intervals in which the pipe sent up its curling wavelets of smoke about his head, with his body thrown back, face lifted, and heels upon a chair opposite. And thrice, during his revery, did he fill the bowl of the pipe with fresh tobacco. Meanwhile, his snuff-box lay untouched upon the table. He never took snuff except in the presence of others. Snuff-taking was one of his processes for pause—for gaining time—for masking a wood or purpose.

In this soliloquy you have the secret of his moral make. Cold, calculating, selfish, remorseless, subtle as a serpent, and capable of using his fangs even where his passions are unexcited. He was too phlegmatic to woo. He thought too little of the sex, for such an effort. He could toil and weave laboriously in the effort to secure his enemies in his meshes, but he could not toil in behalf of his own heart. Power was his passion. He knew nothing of the fine, inspiring frenzies of love. Love he knew only in its coarser forms, as the creature of will and passion; and the coldness of his heart rendered him susceptible, even in this degree, only at periods, and when his brain craved a respite from political intrigues. We see what are his calculations touching the condition of the country, and

the prospects of the war. His politics were wanting as they chiefly contemplated the surface. Of men, in general, he knew much—could probe the ordinary character with skill and adroitness—but of superior men, having great impulse, without which there is no great virtue, he knew nothing. Enthusiasm was a thing of depth, beyond his plummet. Thus, it was that the very pressure which was calculated to bring out the real heroism in the country, was beheld by him only as a crushing and irresistible one—one to crush and be irresistible only among the class which he could comprehend—those who calculated the chances of the struggle, rather than the merits of it, and who gauged their patriotism by hopes and fears, rather than love, principle, and duty. In brief, this man, wonderfully shrewd and cunning, was master only of the avenues of the brain; of the deep, full heart, whether in man or woman—the absorbing generous affections, the glorious impulses, the honest gushings, and noble frenzies—he had no knowledge. For these he made no allowance.

But we need not linger in his analysis. He will develop himself as we proceed. Enough that, having finished his revery and soliloquy, his pipe and plans, he prepared to join, and exercise his raw recruits. We need scarcely say that he gave them sufficient employment. He despatched sundry of his best men in different directions. He had silently matured the details of a progress, in which he was to act more decisively than ever upon Travis. But his necessities required that he should also send out his spies, to ascertain, if possible, what degree of risk he incurred in lingering about the village. The reports of scattered bands of the partisans *below* him, were calculated to render him uneasy. In fact, he felt that an enterprise against him, by a spirited and able captain, might have put him and his little troop entirely *hors-de-combat*. He had felt himself safe only in the supposed absence of the Americans with Greene and Marion, across the Santee. He had been so far safe, in fact, only as it was generally known by the partisans that he was temporarily invalided and in concealment, without any troops with him, and that they had their hands full elsewhere, of much better employment than looking after a game which promised so little of reward for the trouble of the search

It was, indeed, only within the last ten days, and when he had succeeded in picking up some recruits, that he had ventured openly to show himself in Orangeburg. It was the report of Richard Coulter's troop in the neighborhood, that now, most of all, made him feel the necessity of a proper vigilance. Accordingly, his spies and scouts, such as they were, were all set in motion.

Leaving him to his plans and practices, let us see after Sinclair. We join him late in the day, when, having recrossed the river in Rowe's canoe, paddled over by the negro-boy, his horse swimming beside the boat as before, he sped up on the route toward Holly-Dale. He drew rein in the same neighborhood where he had held a previous interview with Travis. Here he stabled his horse in covert, and prepared to wait the reappearance of that person who, as he had learned, had gone down that morning to the village. We may state that Travis and Inglehardt again had a long private interview together, the result of which—both parties playing fox in the game—was to leave the latter in as great a degree of incertitude as ever—his instincts making him suspicious, his thought denying all reason for doubt or apprehension. Travis repeated his assurances of good faith—swearing at his leek, like Pistol, even while he swallowed it—and Inglehardt insinuating his warning of the penalties that would follow from his treachery.

"And while you are persuading your daughter, Travis, I must have the privilege of seeing her. My last three visits to your house, have been profitless in this respect. She keeps out of sight. Now she is indisposed, now she has retired for the night, and there is always some excuse. You must enlighten her upon the necessity of having no headache when I come, and particularly against going to bed so early."

Travis gave him a look full of hate and venom, but Inglehardt only laughed.

"By Heaven! Richard Inglehardt, I should sooner brain you than serve you."

"Ah! but that wouldn't serve *you*. Remember, as I have been at the pains to show you, the hour of my death is that of your arrest for treason, to say nothing of certain minor offences. The papers—proofs—I can reach at any moment, *so long*

as I live—dead, speechless, they are at once transferred to the keeping of Commandant Balfour. But, enough!"

And he handed his mull with nicely-extended finger to his auditor, throwing up the silver lid as he spoke.

"No, sir!" answered Travis, with stern look and emphasis—no, sir! none of your snuff!"

The other only smiled as he helped himself His thought was:—

"Yes, I have him in the toils, and he feels it. He has no means of evasion."

In fact, Travis had played his cards so well, that Inglehardt's instincts were shamed almost into silence by his mental convictions. They still lived, and were still somewhat watchful, but they were no longer urgent.

"Have you heard, Captain Inglehardt," said Travis somewhat abruptly, "that Dick Coulter, with some ten or a dozen troopers, has been seen in the neighborhood of Cooper's swamp?" thus giving very gratuitous information, and mutilating it besides—cutting down the twenty or thirty of Coulter to ten or a dozen. Inglehardt noticed this discrepancy between this account and his own, but the fact of Travis giving the information at all, was in proof of his playing fairly with him, and he could readily conceive that a discrepancy, in the report of numbers, might easily occur without being a fraudulent one. He did not know that Travis was already apprised of his own perfect knowledge of the whereabouts of Coulter; and he still pretended ignorance of the fact till the present moment.

"Ha! Coulter!" he exclaimed—"He about! At Cooper's swamp, eh? But with a dozen men only! He must be seen to. We must take a *drive* in that quarter shortly, as soon as I get my ragamuffins in good order for a charge."

What more was spoken between them, we need not here report. It was of business matters, affecting their own relations, and those of the army; but as Travis was about to leave the loyalist captain, the other touched him gently on the arm, and looking with his deep, keen eyes, a stare of sharp and unyielding firmness, he said:—

"Remember, Captain Travis, I am serious in the demand to

see your daughter when I happen to visit Holly-Dale. She must not keep out of my sight. She must not show aversion. There must be no petty excuses of headache and early couching. I must not only have your assurance that you will fulfil your engagement, but I must exercise my own eyes, in seeing what sort of progress you make. It must not be a thing of mere coercion;—she must be won—her affections—"

"And how the d—l am I to teach them in your behalf, when, perhaps, she has no affection for you?"

"Ask the devil, and he may instruct you in the process. At all events, I require to watch the progress. To-morrow, if you say so—to-morrow, I will visit Holly-Dale."

It was with indiscreet quickness that Travis answered:—

"Not to-morrow! not so soon! It will take me some days to prepare her mind."

"Ah! her antipathies are very strong, I see! But you will advise me when she relents, when she relaxes, when she begins to love—will you?"

"You are a sneering devil, Inglehardt."

"And you anything but a smiling one, Travis," was the quiet reply, "though devil you are, by all that's satanical. The only wonder is how you should ever have been blessed with so saintly a daughter."

Travis felt it in his heart to knock him down, and looked it; but the other, his eyes still on him, fed his nose from the snuff-box, with his complacency totally unmoved. That prudence which taught Travis to *seem* very angry with his subtle associate, taught him to subdue within proper limits his genuine anger. They separated, with a burst of bad temper from Travis, and a cool, contemptuous grin and bow from Inglehardt.

CHAPTER XXX.

HOW LOVERS MAY FORGET THEMSELVES.

"Oh! verily, a pleasant confidence!—
So sure in love that nothing can be lost,
Though very much at stake. If their souls keep
This music to the last, 'twill end in heaven:
'Tis Truth here, happy in its innocence."— *Old Play.*

The cool, sarcastic, contemptuous tyranny of Inglehardt, was momently strengthening the resolution of resistance and rebellion in the heart of Travis; and preparing him to second the desires—whatever they might be—of Willie Sinclair and his associates.

"Curse him to his marrow!" he muttered as he left the village. "He shall pay for all this insolence before I'm done with him. Let this arrangement but ripen—let me but blind him for the present, and I shall have my revenge out of him."

He rode briskly until he had nearly reached the spot where he expected to meet Willie Sinclair, when he subdued his paces, and was, after a little while, joined by the person he expected. Then he dismounted and led his horse into the woods.

"Well, major," said he impatiently—"have you heard? Is all right? Shall I have the meeting."

"Yes: to-morrow, at three in the afternoon, at Holly-Dale. Abram will bring him across in the dug-out."

"You will be present."

"Not at your conference, of course, which I suppose you desire should be private; but I will be in the neighborhood I must keep good watch to see that he suffers no harm."

"You do not doubt my good faith, major. By Heaven, sir, you will find me true. My feelings and policy go together here."

"I trust so; I believe you: but you can only assure me of yourself. I must make sure against all others. This man Inglehardt has increased his troop. He may be suspicious. He could be troublesome."

"He has no suspicion of you — none of our project — he may have of me. But I flatter myself I have shut up his eyes, or diverted them to another quarter. I have told him that Coulter is in the river swamp below, and this offers him a new subject for anxiety."

"But why tell him that?"

"It can do no harm to Coulter, and I told Inglehardt just enough of the truth to lead him into a snare. Instead of twenty-five troopers which is the least force of Coulter, I said he had only ten or a dozen; and instead of Chevillette's and Barton's, I represented him as harboring considerably beyond."

"I suspect he knows better. He has his own scouts below. There were two of them scouting down the Charleston road to-day."

"He has no scouts worth a copper."

"Still, it is something of an error with politicians to refine too much. I hope you did not intrude your intelligence urgently. He had probably heard of Coulter from other quarters."

"So I thought; and hence my information. That it was already known to him, was not a fact to be known to me. That I told him what I did know, and what he would be likely to suppose that I knew, was calculated to do away with all doubt that I was dealing honestly with him. No harm can come of it, I think."

"Perhaps not — I hope not! Still, I would stake nothing unnecessarily, nothing for which the game does not absolutely call. But I must leave you. All is sufficiently understood between us. You will look for us at three to-morrow."

We need not report more of their dialogue. The parties separated; Sinclair riding below, in the direction of Orangeburg; Travis speeding homeward at a smart canter.

The conference had taken place in the thicket just below the "Four-mile Branch," a place that seemed to promise perfect secrecy. Everything was quiet when they reached the spot,

which might have been a hundred yards distant from the road. On one side of them ran the branch. Between them and the road spread a thick bay, on the edge of which, seated on a log, and holding the bridle of their horses, they communed together. Here not a murmur was to be heard saving their own voices. The air was hushed. The bay was the abiding place only of the reptile and the wild cat. We have heard what was said between them, of interest to this progress. Unfortunately, amid all this silence and seeming security, it was heard by other ears. Scarcely had they ridden out of sight when a wild and savage-looking being, huge of limb, brutal of aspect, in ragged garments, but armed with pistols and knife, started out of the bushes, not ten steps from the spot where they had been seated. He had heard every syllable. It had been easy for him to have shot them both down with a single bullet; but this was by no means his policy. Their secret was of much more importance to his interests than their lives. Then, too, there was some peril in any more demonstrative course. Had his pistol missed fire, his own fate was certain.

The savage being thus emerging from the thicket, was no less a personage than "Hell-fire Dick"—a cognomen which he had learned to prize as of more value, and more distinction than the innocent name of Joel Andrews received from his parents.

"Ho! ho! ho! hain't I got you now, Cappin Travis. Won't it be nuts for Dick Inglehardt, what I has to tell him. And you, too, Willie Sinclair!—I reckon I has you, too, under the saddle! I reckon I'll hev' a ride on both o' your necks by three o'clock to-morrow. Well! if this news don't set me all right with Cappin Inglehardt, for the matter of that desartion, and git me some good gould guineas besides, I'm never no more to be in the way of good luck, and I may as well give up trying.

"Now, who'd a thought I'd ha' cotched Willie Sinclair hyar, when he's throw'd me off his trail everywhar else? Jest when I was a sleeping too. Well, it's a sign that I'm to hev' a chaince of good fortin again; and I'll be at her like a man that knows she's worth a tussle.

"And how shill i; be?"

And he mused awhile, sitting upon the same tree which Sinclair and Travis had so lately occupied.

"It's no use to let Rafe Branson know about this diskivery. Dick Inglehardt never pays too freely, and the diskivery is all my own. Why should I give the 'Trailer' any of my own hard airnings? And what's he jist now, even ef I was to look a'ter him. May be some five miles off, and whar? Ef I goes about making signals in these woods, who knows but I may start up a dozen of Sinclair's scouts. Taint reasonable for me to do that. I could have shot him and Travis both — always supposing that the we'pon didn't miss fire, but there mought be a dozen troopers closing in upon me from the road. Oh! ef I could find out where Sinclair has hid away that hundred guineas that he tuk from Pete Bledgit. In course, he aint a-riding about with it now. That chaince is done and gone, clear. And what's the chaince now? Why to catch them two conspirating rebels in the same net. That's the how; and the way to do it is to see Cappin Inglehardt.

"But what if he axes me about that desartion, and is wanting to be hard upon me. I must make tarms with him first. Yes, that's the way with him. He'd be mighty smooth with me till he'd sucked out my secrets, and then he'd put on a grand look, and talk of example, and how decent and proper 'twas to hang a man for desarting, jist to encourage other desarters. I must hev' tarms with our ily tongue cappin.

"Ha! and thar's that matter about Coulter. So he's about agin — and I suppose harboring in 'Bear Castle.' He ought to build and settle thar, now that they call him the hero of 'Bear Castle.' He kin fight and he will, and ef he's got thirty men with him, I reckon he's a-preparing now to make a dash at Inglehardt. And our cappin wants all the men he kin git. He'll be glad enough to hev' me and the Trailer back agin in his ranks. He knows what I am for an orderly, and he knows what the Trailer is for a scout. We air as good as any other six fellows he could pick up, and stout fellows air a getting scarce in these parts. I see my way pretty cl'ar now."

Suffice it that our Dick of Tophet deliberately arranged all the argument, with which to win his way back to the favor of Captain Inglehardt, before rising from his seat. When he had

fully conned his part he got up, moved to the opposite side of the *bay* and brought out the little hackney of a horse, of which he had dispossessed Blodgit so unscrupulously. He mounted, and took his way down for Orangeburg, avoiding the public road as much as possible, and proceeding so slowly as to have the cloak of night about him before penetrating the village.

Sinclair, meanwhile, never once apprehending this new danger, sped downward, also, until he reached the forks of the road near Pen Branch, when he turned to the right, and aped in a northwest direction for a mile. Here he turned into the woods, found a hollow tree, which delivered him a letter, possessed himself of its contents, and having destroyed it, wheeled about, and returned upon his own steps till he gained the point where he had been accustomed to ford the river. By this time it was dark, and objects were discerned indistinctly. He, however, rode on through the woods, which he thoroughly knew, at a trot, and was just descending the hill-slope to the swamp, when a pistol bullet whistled by his ears, the dull report, without echoes, following a moment after.

His blood was roused. To dash into the thicket, on his right, whence the shot issued, was his first instinct, but he felt, the next moment, how absurd would be any attempt to discover the assassin in such a thicket, and amidst the increasing darkness. He gave but a single frowning glance at the dense harborage, and congratulating himself upon his escape, he sped forward with as much haste as the forest would permit, and was soon beyond the reach of any similar salutation from the same hands.

"Missed him, by jingo!" quoth the Trailer, rising from his perch some twenty steps from the spot where Sinclair had passed. "Dern the pappies! I don't believe in pistols no how. But I thought I had him dead. I never was good at no kind of shooting we'pon, and I don't think it's the business of a trailer to fight. He's only got to trail, and scent, and scout. Now if Hell-fire Dick had been hyar, we'd ha' fixed him. But we've got his track agin, and that's something. I wander ef he's got them guineas in his pouch yit?"

Our major bore a charmed life. He crossed the river in safety, and was soon in the camp with Abram.

"No tidings yet of Ballou, 'Bram?"

"Nebber yar not'ing 'bout 'em, maussa. I feard, ef he ain't drunk someway in de woods, dem tory ob Ingl'art got em.

Sinclair mused.

"'Bram!" said he, "there are enemies on our track. I have just escaped a pistol-shot."

"De Lawd be praise! Whay, maussa?"

Sinclair described the spot. 'Bram knew instantly what was to be done, and girded himself up accordingly for the trail. "Fight fire with fire," is the forest maxim. Let the scout track the scout. Though not equal to Ballou, not equal to "the Trailer," 'Bram had a good nose, was untiring, sagacious, vigilant, quick to follow, and keen to find.

"I mus' look a'ter dis pistol-pusson," said he quietly.

"Yes, 'Bram, that is what you are now to do; but the course for you is down to Holly-Dale. You must cross with me. I shall be about the bluff till midnight, and if you can get up to me by that hour, we shall recross together. We have got too much work to-morrow not to need all the sleep we can get to-night, and my eyes are even now drawing straws."

The canoe was put out with the two in it, passed rapidly over to the other side, and fastened out of sight among the swamp willows at the foot of the bluff. Sinclair gave full directions to the negro, and the stout and faithful fellow had soon buried himself in the thickets below Holly-Dale, and was working his way downward, sly as a fox, stealthy as a serpent, and keen-eyed as a lynx. He had some two miles to go before he could reach the spot where Sinclair had escaped his peril. We need not follow him. His master had ascended the bluff meanwhile, and stolen off to a little grove of cedars, where he was wont to meet with Bertha Travis and her brother. Here he laid himself down to wait. He looked up through the green foliage, at the stars, out upon the river, gliding downward with a pleasant murmur, softly bright, darkly clear, and with a wing of cooling speeding over its surface from the east. That breeze was full of the inspiring sense of life. He threw his bosom wide to its penetrating freshness. His day had been one of toil, beneath a sky that seemed all one sun. He had scarcely rested from motion one hour in the twelve; and the present respite,

in that cool breeze, was something more than relief. It won him from musing into dreaming, in which all the images were delicious.

After a while two figures emerged from the grove, and came out upon the bluff. They were Bertha and Henry Travis.

"He is not here," said the boy.

"He is among the cedars," answered the girl, and they turned to the left, and moved down the slope leading to the swamp, where the cedars grew most thickly, the boy leading the way, the girl following slowly. In a few moments he hurried to her and said in a whisper:—

"Oh! Bertha, would you believe it, he is asleep under the cedars, sound asleep! Who would believe it. I thought a trooper never slept."

And he laughed merrily at his own notion. The girl hesitated for a moment. But why? Ask that inscrutable little deity who occupies so gladly the vacant places in a virgin's heart, to unfold to you the mystery of his rule, and the caprice which marks his impulse. There was some little strange conceit of maidenhood which made Bertha Travis reluctant to look upon her lover sleeping. It was a new situation in which to see him.

But Henry pulled her forward.

"Only think, a great dragoon officer asleep on his post."

"He must be very tired, Henry. Besides, he is not now on duty."

"Indeed!" said the boy pertly—"but you know nothing about it. He told me himself that he was never on severer duty than now."

"And it has exhausted him."

"We must waken him up."

"No! Let him sleep. He must be very much tired to sink down and sleep here."

The girl might well say that. Sinclair had never dreamed that he should be so surprised by the velvet-footed god, on the very threshold of his sweetheart's dwelling, and when he came especially to see her.

"But suppose he should be surprised, Bertha, by some of these scouts? Who knows? They're all about."

"We'll watch for him, Henry," said the girl. "He must be very tired to fall asleep here."

Surely, Bertha, no conclusion could be more logical.

"Very well! I'll keep sentry along that wood. You watch here, Bertha, and when I give the alarm, and fire off my piece, do you prepare to rouse him and run. Take right down the slope for the swamp; you'll find the dug-out down among the willows, and push right out into the stream."

The boy was anxious to feel his responsibilities, and to prove that he was equal to them. The damsel laughed.

"Where's your piece, Henry?"

"Oh! never mind. I only used the military phrase. When I give tongue and shout, you may know that the enemy is upon us."

And the boy marched away full of dignity, and took post along the edge of the wood. Bertha walked around her lover, looked down upon him, stole nearer, looked out to see if Henry's eyes could watch her as well as the wood, and, seemingly satisfied of the impossibility of his doing the feat, she suffered herself to sink down near the head of our sleeping dragoon.

Sinclair slept profoundly, breathing easily and gently, as if no load lay upon his chest or conscience. Bertha watched the noble ingenuous face as it lay revealed beneath the starlight, and she thought—ah! that is beyond us—we really know not what she thought. But unquestionably thought was busy in her little brain, and feeling in her heart. The picture made her think. The feminine mind thinks through pictures, precisely as does that of genius; hence the delicacy of genius—its exquisite sensibilities which can appreciate the most delicate sympathies in humanity. It is because of the *feminine* element, which distinguishes the true genius always. It is the soul informing the sensuous.

We have no right to pry into Bertha's thoughts, but we may watch her conduct. She gazed, for long, upon the face of the sleeper, seeming never weary of the gaze; after awhile her hands lifted his hair—he had made a pillow of his cap—and drew out the long masses, which had grown in the busy excitements of war, which left no time for the toilet, almost as long as those of Absalom or Samson; and, playing with his hair, and

looking in his face—Bertha finally—slept also!—her head being quietly suffered to rest beside her lover's—while one of her arms—of course without her consciousness—stretched over and rested upon his bosom. Was ever such a situation!

Let us leave them for a space—leave Henry Travis diligently playing sentinel, and look after the scouting negro 'Bram.

He was not successful. "The Trailer," after the escape of Sinclair, had contented himself with marking the trail, and then changed his ground. As a good scout, he knew too well the danger of lingering too long in the old form. He had mounted and made off within a quarter of an hour after.

But 'Bram *staked* the precinct for a couple of tedious hours. He had just resolved to give up the search, and return to his master, when, stretching out his body, for relief from the contracted position, he felt a heavy hand laid upon his shoulder from behind. The heart of the negro was in his mouth in an instant. He knew that the enemy, if such he were, had him at great advantage, and with a grunt, he muttered in low tones:—

"Who dat?"

He was relieved by a good-humored but subdued laugh, in the well-known voice of Jim Ballou.

"And I say, nigger, is that the way you do your scouting, grunting as you go—as you go—just like a lazy hog in scarce acorn time? I know'd you by the grunt, twenty yards off. I did—twenty yards off."

"Ha! I so glad. I bin 'feard, Ballou, when you put you' paw 'pon my shoulder, 'twa some ob dem d—m' Ingl'art tory I so glad 'tis you. And whay de debble you bin all dis time!"

"That's what we may talk about, old fellow, when we get to camp—get to camp! Where's the major now?"

"I leff him on de Bluff at Holly-Dale."

"Well, let's go there—go!"

And thither they went.

Our young self-appointed sentinel, Henry Travis, was at his post, pacing to and fro along the edge of the wood, satisfied that he was doing great things, and doing them excellently well. His imagination was picturing to his eyes, a future career in arms, in which he was to become the observed of all observers. He was achieving brilliant enterprises, passing

rapidly through all grades of promotion; he was already a colonel of cavalry, and calculating a quick passage over the interval separating him still from the command of a brigade. That was certain, however. Oh! the dream of youth! how pleasantly it persuades the hope over that dreary Zahara, which teaches us the sternness of truth, in its naked simplicity, at such perilous cost—that experience which young men too little value, and old men are apt to value too much!

Just then, the boy was made a prisoner—clasped tenaciously in a pair of rough arms, against which his struggles were of as much avail as those of a butterfly in the vice of a blacksmith.

What an empire of dream was upset in a moment. The colonel was a prisoner—the hope of the brigadiership was gone—gone—gone! So complete was the surprise that the poor sentinel totally forgot to discharge his piece—that is, forgot that he had need to shout his loudest, to apprize the sleeping dragoon of his enemy. Before he quite recovered himself to halloo—he kicked and struggled lustily, however, in silence—the merry chuckle of 'Bram relieved him, and he was released. His captor was Jim Ballou, who said to him:—

"It takes a good deal, Master Henry, to make a sodger; and to be a good sentinel a man ought to be a good sodger. It's mighty hard to keep down thinking when a man's a watching, and yet to be thinking at such a time is apt to turn out mighty poor watching—poor watching. You see how easy it was to captivate you."

"But how could you come up and I not hear you, Mr. Ballou?"

"That's an art in scouting, Master Henry, and if Jim Ballou is good for anything it is scouting. I'm a sort of born scout—a born scout—it comes from natur, mostly, though one has a great deal to larn to make natur perfect—perfect. But where's the major?"

"He's sleeping yonder down among the cedars. He was so tired. We found him asleep, and sister said she'd watch by him, and I was to watch the wood, and I did think I was watching closely, and to be so caught!"

The boy was mortified. It was, indeed, something of a fall from the brilliant progress to a colonelcy, with a brigadiership in the vista, into sudden and unexpected captivity.

"Never you mind, Master Henry," said the scout consoling him. "No man can be made a sodger in a day, or a year. It's a business for a good long life. It's easier a great deal for a young man to fight than to watch. You must keep his blood on a boil if you want good work out of him. On a boil, I say. If you don't—if you let the fire burn down, he'll be looking out for the stars, and walk into the pit—into the pit. Five years sodgering is needful to make a fellow even a good sentinel, and it takes more than that a great deal to make a scout. You'll do better on a charge than on a post, Master Henry, and you needn't get vexed with yourself, or feel ashamed that you ain't a perfect sodger at the beginning of the war. I ain't afeard that you won't make a good one in time—good in time. You'll do! you will! But let's look up the major now. He's got to open his eyes—yes, open his eyes, now."

The three walked together across the bluff toward the cedars, and Sinclair and Bertha still lay sleeping side by side, her slender arm across his herculean breast.

"Why, they're *both* asleep!" cried Henry.

"Yes, who'd believe it!" responded Ballou. "It's a picture of the babies in the wood—babies in the wood."

"How dat, Jim Ballou!" quoth Bram, indignant. "You call big man like dat baby?"

"Man or baby, he must up and be a-doing. Hello, major! Hello! and heave up!"

With a fling that shook the arm of Bertha from his bosom, Sinclair leaped to his feet, and drew his pistols.

"Friends, major," said Ballou, "friends."

"How! what's this, Ballou?" Then seeing Bertha, now standing up and rising, bewildered rather than ashamed at her situation. "Ha! you too, Bertha?" And he clasped her in his arms.

"When did you come?"

She could tell him nothing. They had both slept three hours at least, and merrily did Henry Travis laugh, and pleasant were the mutual chucklings of Ballou and Bram, as they thought of the discovery.

Poor Bertha knew not what to say. Of course she tried to explain and to understand. She had watched; she knew not

how long, and still he slept. And everything was so quiet, and Henry was on the watch—and—and—

"Say no more, dear heart," said Sinclair, taking her long tresses into his hands—they had escaped the comb while she slept—"Say no more! I am only vexed with myself that I should sleep like a dullard, without once dreaming what a dear companion was at my side. And what news, Ballou? Where have you harbored so long?"

I reckon, major, you begun to think I had fallen back upon the Jamaica."

"I confess, Ballou, such were my fears!"

"I know'd it! I know'd it! But you were wrong. Hadn't I made an eternal oath, and didn't I call upon the Lord himself to be a witness? When I break that oath, major, I'm a lost sinner! No! I hain't had a drop to drink, and not always a mouthful to eat. I've had hard work, and was so bewildered between the two rapscallions, Devil Dick and the Trailer, that I couldn't get to you. I wished a thousand times that I could split myself into three—into three—split myself into three parts—and each of them a good Jim Ballou scout—that I might do the thing clean. 'Twas work, sir—*work!* And we've all got to work, sir. There's trouble in the wind, sir—in the wind."

And the party seated themselves while Jim Ballou told the story of his progress from the moment of his start, on the trail of the two outlaws. We shall have to abridge this narrative to *our* limits, though Sinclair found it an interesting one, as did Bertha and Henry Travis.

CHAPTER XXXI.

DOUBT, ANXIETY, PREPARATION.

"Now this traverse,
Will he as promptly take and well pursue,
As if the zig-zag of the perilous road,
Were fashioned in his brain;—each trick and turn,
Having no finger pointer on the route,
As legible as if written down by card."—*The Strategist.*

"You had the start of them twelve hours, major. They tracked you to Turkey hill. They lost you there."

"How do you know that, Ballou?"

"I tracked them, and found where they were at fault. I know how they missed you. They followed your trail to the stable, and supposed they followed it back to the house when you set out again. But you did not go back to the house, though that was the common way, when you went off. Your horse wasn't brought up to the house at all. You went to the stable, and there mounted. I found your moccasin track in the sand by the post of the gate. When you left the stable you went out of the back door, there you mounted, and went right down into the creek; you kept the creek up for twenty yards, when you went out upon the banks, and there took the Granby road down for a while, when you struck into Cawcaw swamp, and kept the edge of it till you were within a mile of the village; there you fastened your horse to a hickory, on the edge of a *bay* that was a sink hole—and pushed out straight for the village. I reckon from the footmarks of the horse, stamping where you hitched him, that you had him there half the night. You brought him out twenty large ears of corn—no *nubbins*—and three bundles of fodder. You brought it yourself; for there were no foot-tracks but your own. When you mounted again,

which I reckon you did just about daylight, you took the road on the outside of the village till you struck in for the bridge; there you crossed, pushed up the river road for a bit, then went into cover, and hitched your nag again, and kept him some hours hitched, when you pushed forward again, and made through the woods till you got to the bluff at Holly-Dale. Before I had done tracking you to the village, 'Bram caught up with me, and when we had tracked you to Holly-Dale, we crossed the river at the ford below, and I planted 'Bram in the camp opposite the Holly-Dale landing, where he was to signal you."

"So far right—all as you say, Ballou! But what made you separate from 'Bram?"

"I didn't think he was of much account in helping me—"

"Wha' dat! Ha! 'Bram nobody, I 'spose?"

"Yes, you're good enough, 'Bram, and could ha' helped me, as I found afterward, but I didn't think it then. The business then before me was to find the trail of Devil Dick and Brunson. That was the true business, and it has kept me mighty busy I can tell you—mighty busy ever since I left your trail. For you see Dick and Brunson divided, and I could never get on the spot where they did divide, and they worried me from side to side, with the crossing of their trails, and I did not dare to leave 'em to bring up 'Bram for fear I should lose 'em both. But I soon found that when they had lost you at Turkey hill, they guessed it boldly that you'd make for Holly-Dale, and here they come, almost in a bee-line."

"Ah!—well!"

"They've been on your track more than once, but I don't think they found out our ford until to-day, even if they've found it out at all, and what with your constant changes, and the use of the dug-out both here and at Captain Rowe's, they've been kept mighty busy to get and keep on the track. Well, as I was to watch after them that were a-watching after you, I had nothing to do but to keep their trails warm, and that's been work enough. To-day, Devil Dick laid eyes on you, I reckon, for the first time. He must have seen you go into the wood with Captain Travis. He was hid—that is, his horse—which is Pete Blodgit's by rights—was hid on the opposite side of the bay where you and the captain sat and talked. I reckon

he was not more than three hundred yards of you all the time, but I couldn't find his trail anywhere from his horse's."

"He couldn't have heard our speech."

"I don't know, but I reckon not. The bay was thick and wide, more than a hundred yards across, and, as I tell you, his nag was fastened in the woods t'other side. If he had been watching near enough to *hear* you, he would have been quite near enough to shoot you both, and I recken there was no good reason why he shouldn't do it, if he could. He passed me going down—I suppose after you had gone up—about fifty yards off, and was then going it, in a smart canter, toward the village. If I had been mounted, I could have overhauled him as he rode, but my horse was hidden half-a-mile off, and I was snaking it toward the bay, where I know'd you had gone in. As for 'the Trailer,' I lost his track yesterday, and couldn't stop to hunt it up, being so keen after Devil Dick's, though from what 'Bram tells me, and what I know myself, it must have been him who shot at you this afternoon. 'Bram says 'twas a pistol-bullet, and Brunson and Devil Dick, both have pistols and nothing else, except perhaps a knife; and there's been no hostile person, that I could find, upon any of the tracks hereabout in the last three days. Of course that's always excepting the visit of Captain Inglehardt and four of his mounted men to Holly-Dale; but they took openly up the main road."

Sinclair listened to this narrative with close attention, interrupting it only when he desired fuller details in regard to particular facts. Ballou resumed, and closed thus:—

"I pushed after Devil Dick, till I made sure that he had crossed the bridge, and had gone into the village. Then I turned about and pushed up where I thought I should find you. But I thought it best to snake awhile on the old trail of Brunson, for I was jubous he was going to give us trouble; and so it was that I happened to come upon 'Bram, who was crawling over a log, and forgetting himself, and giving a grunt like an old hog every now and then; as if a good scout wasn't always a silent dog."

"I hu't [hurt] myse'f on de log, das wha' mek me grunt; and ef you bin hu't youse'f like me, Mass Ballou, I reckon you lay up t'ree day wid grunts and 'flictions."

Ballou didn't notice this resentful speech. He resumed:—

"It's for you, major, to say what's to be done. There's no saying what Devil Dick's gone to Orangeburg for. But he's after mischief. He's a deserter from Inglehardt's own rangers, and so's Brunson, but they'll join again, if Inglehardt'll let them. My idea is that he's gone to make terms with his old captain, and that he expects to catch you here at Holly-Dale. So, look out—that's all—be on the look out."

"Bertha, I must see your father. You and Henry must now return to the house. But you will scarce need any more sleep to-night, eh?"

This was said archly, and he walked on with the damsel, in the direction of the dwelling, and their parting words were inaudible to other ears.

"Henry," said he to the boy—"are you willing to do duty?"

"Anything, Major Willie, for you."

"Do you know the place called 'Bull-fight Pond'?"

"Yes, every cypress round it."

"Can you get a horse by sunrise to-morrow and canter off there, letting nobody know but Bertha?"

"Yes, I can do it, if I let nobody know. But if father or mother guessed it, they'd never suffer it. They're for keeping me a boy always."

"Take this ring, ride thither as soon as you can in the morning; you will probably find the troops of St. Julien there. Give him that ring, by which he will know that you come from me, and tell him that he must use his spurs. Let him come off with you, and see that he hides away in the wood on the opposite side of the road just fronting your upper avenue. He will know my signal, and when he arrives here and puts himself in cover, tell him to hang out his as agreed on."

The brother and sister moved quickly to the house. Sinclair lurked about the edges of the thin wood which lay between him and the river. The two scouts kept watch on the thickets below. Soon, Captain Travis joined our major of dragoons, and received in brief sentences, the report made by Ballou.

It staggered him.

"This is unfortunate. It will precipitate events. I expected to break with him, and was preparing to defy him. To-morrow's interview will probably enable me to do that. But—"

The other interrupted him.

"Of that interview he can know nothing. I have no reason to suppose that this spy has arrived at anything more than the fact that we have been together, and that I am harbored at Holly-Dale. He has only reached me, by suspecting that I would be here."

"And Inglehardt will seek you here? He hates you, and would destroy you without remorse."

"I know it—but fear nothing for myself. I shall be prepared for Inglehardt and will gladly welcome the struggle with him. But there is *one* whom I am loath to peril here, with the chances of a conflict before me, the results of which are doubtful. Why not defer this interview?"

"To me it would probably be fatal! To save myself I shall have to fly—whither? To the doubtful securities of the American party. No! not unless I had the *one* guaranty from the only hand that can give it. I must have his pledge. I will trust no other."

"But can you not put yourself in hiding until the opportunity for the meeting is afforded you?"

"That would be fatal to my fortunes. It would be equivalent to a full confession of all that might be charged against me, and would lead to the confiscation of all my effects."

"Your negroes might *be run* this very night. 'Bram will take charge of them to and across the Santee."

"I will not risk that. I know that Rawdon with his twelve hundred men are approaching from the Congaree. I know that Stewart, with a like force and convoy, is pressing up from below, to a junction with Rawdon. Between these armies the risk would be immense, since they necessarily preclude the possibility of any American parties between."

"Not so conclusive. Greene is in full pursuit of Rawdon, and his forces consist mostly of mounted infantry. Sumter, Washington, Marion, and Lee, working apart at this moment, are under orders for co-operation. They will unite and force Rawdon to an engagement, with the odds all on our side. But do you know that Cruger is pressing down from Ninety-Six with a force of twelve hundred also, the garrison at that place, and all the loyalists of the region, the men all mounted, and

ordered to take this very route between the forks of Edisto? Judge what are the chances of safety for your negroes, if Cruger finds them here, and learns from Inglehardt that you have abandoned the royal cause."

Travis clasped his head between his hands.

"On every side I see the danger. But Cruger is not here yet, and can not well be here under three days; and I will not —I dare not—trust the Americans with my property, until I have the guaranty of that *one* signature which alone can insure me safety. If it comes to the worst, Major Sinclair, I can always buy off Inglehardt."

"With the hand of your daughter?" said the other indignantly.

"Ay, sir! and a child, for whom a father has toiled all his life, may well make a sacrifice in his behalf, which will insure her all that he has toiled for."

Sinclair strode the ground to and fro, with impatience, anxiety, and a feverish vexation, which he could scarcely suppress from speech.

"Captain Travis," he said, "is it possible that you do not see what you require me to put in peril—the very destinies of the state?"

"I can not help it, sir! I must have the required securities. None other will avail me. But I do not think that Inglehardt will attempt anything so soon. He knows not what we know. He only knows that you have been with me—that you are lurking about—and that I am dealing with you, and so against himself."

"And will not this precipitate his action?"

"Not till he is stronger. His force is small, and he will apprehend from Coulter."

"Captain Travis, I pledge you my life that you will receive the required indemnity without needing *his* presence here. I will guaranty it. Say the word, and I despatch Ballou to keep him from coming here. I will remain, and do what I can toward receiving Inglehardt in a proper manner."

But Travis had become dogged in degree with his own apprehensions.

"I must have the signature—the certificate—and then I

care not how soon the issue comes. I shall then be ready for any event. But I know too well the tender mercies of the whigs to the loyalists to trust them without written security, which shall acknowledge my services, now, while the war lasts, and after it, when the reign of peace shall witness the resentments of society against the victims of war. I must insist upon the arrangement or nothing."

"Be it so. I shall submit the facts to himself, though I ride all night. He shall determine for himself."

"Remember, Major Sinclair, how many necks of Charleston citizens lie in my keeping!"

"Do not threaten, Captain Travis, I implore you!" was the answer, in tones full of disgust.

"I can't help it, sir. Tell him all."

"Enough; I will tell him all that it is proper he should know. But, I would have you, as the father of Bertha Travis, forbear a language which would give her pain, and can not do you honor."

"Oh! sir, I have survived the romantic notions of youth."

"Honor and magnanimity are, I trust, not less the virtues of age. Can it be, sir, that, under any circumstances, you would give up to British vengeance, the people of whom you speak?"

"I must make them, if need be, the price of my own security."

"Heavens!" exclaimed Sinclair, striding away. He returned a moment after.

"Sir — Mr. Travis — I will communicate with my principal to-night. He shall know the risk which he is required to encounter, and if he determine to meet you, I will do all that I can to see that he does not suffer. If you will not trust me, he may trust you; and I — I will put my trust, under God, in myself, and my own resources. Enough then — I must hasten from you. One word before we part. You have those fatal papers in safety?"

"I have!"

"Let me give you a friend's counsel. If there be any of your papers in the village likely to give you trouble, gallop down there to-night, with all the secrecy you can, and get them in your possession."

"I am safe in that quarter."

"So much the better. I leave you. If you do not hear from me by midday to-morrow, take for granted that we withdraw from the meeting. It is one which I dare not counsel *now*."

The next moment, Sinclair had left the place, and, accompanied by Ballou and Abram, was recrossing the river to his camp. There, he gave commissions to both, which were to be executed before morning, and while he himself prepared to leave the swamp for a rapid ride toward the northeast, Ballou set off for the ford with instructions to seek for Coulter; 'Bram, on the other hand, sped away in the opposite direction.

"If there is to be treachery and danger," said our major of dragoons to him, "they shall not find me unprepared."

At twelve o'clock, the next day, Travis received a slip, containing these words:—

"Let him of H. D. know that I see no reason to depart from our arrangement as originally made. J. R."

It was enough. Travis destroyed the paper as soon as he had read it. He had heard nothing of Inglehardt. The day was calm and bright. He did not believe that he had anything to fear. Inglehardt was not likely to hurry himself. He did not relish open demonstrations. He preferred a secret policy, and this always requires time.

Where, meanwhile, was Sinclair?—where Ballou and 'Bram? Young Henry Travis, too, has gone, unsuspected upon his mission—brave, ambitious boy—speeding at a smart canter in search of the troop of St. Julien. All are at work; all busy to one end, the issue of which is yet deeply hidden beneath the cloudy veil which ever hides the coming dawn. They are all busy, and with cheerful hearts and hopeful spirits. But the adverse stars are working. Their enemies are busy also; as how should it be otherwise?—the natural antagonism of evil, being the true motive-power for the exercise of good! Oh! what an absurdity were Virtue, if Vice stood not confronting her, with black aspect, and serpent cunning, and horrent spear!

CHAPTER XXXII.

DICK OF TOPHET ON THE CARPET.

"Command our present members
Be mustered; bid the captain look to 't. Now, sir,
What have you dreamed of late of this war's purpose?"——
"We'll slip you for a season!"—*Cymbeline.*

It was night when Hell-fire Dick found himself in Orangeburg, and at the entrance of the widow Bruce's dwelling.

Captain Inglehardt had been busy all the day with his raw recruits, preparing for a recommencement of the duties of the field, and especially seeking to have them in readiness for the prospective encounter with the troop of Coulter. His scouts were still on the hunt below, along the swamps of Edisto. Inglehardt sat in his chamber seeking solace in his pipe, when the door opened, and Dick of Tophet stood before him — wild of aspect, shaggy haired, with ragged raiment, the grim picture of the ruffian and outlaw that he was.

It was some moments before the captain of loyalists recognised his visiter. When he did, he said:—

"What! You! Are you not afraid to show yourself here, Dick? Don't you know that your life is forfeited? What should keep you from the gallows, fellow, if I should call in a few of my troopers?"

"They're not in calling distance, cappin. I took care of that afore I come here. I know jest where they keep, and know that ef 'twas in me to do sich a thing, I could slash you to pieces afore you could sing a psalm. No! no! I felt my way all along as I come, and I made sure thar was no risk. I am too old a sodger to trust any offser in the army with my life."

The coolness of the ruffian might have alarmed a more timid

and less-prepared person than Richard Inglehardt. He simply cast his eyes upon the pistols that lay before him, convenient to his grasp, to say nothing of the rapier which had just been unbuckled from his side, and leaned against the panel of the fire-place. To grasp either would have been easy. But Inglehardt knew his man, and well conceived that he never would have shown himself but that he had a bargain to drive promising some advantages for any favor he might receive. Besides, he was never more in want of such a person than at the present moment, and half-fancied that the devil had sent him for the peculiar emergency. Still, he was not prepared to admit his own wants, or to accord his favor too readily. He answered the ruffian in the same spirit which prompted his first address.

"Rascal! You have at least lost none of your audacity. Rags, wretchedness, starvation, outlawry, none of these seem to humble you. You are a fool, Dick, with all the devil that you have in you. As for slashing me to pieces, I could blow your brains out before you could lift a finger. Do you suppose that because my troop is in the woods, that I have not help at hand?"

At this moment, a footfall behind the intruder, and between him and the door, caused him to turn his head; when he beheld a great tall angular backwoodsman, weapon in hand, who had just entered the apartment. His presence seemed to confirm Inglehardt's boast of succor, and occasioned a doubt, in the mind of the intruder, whether he himself was secure. In an instant his *couteau de chasse* was flourished in one hand, while he drew a pistol with the other.

"It'll be a bear fight first, I tell you—tooth and nail!" cried the ruffian desperately, and receding obliquely, so as to face both Inglehardt and the backwoodsman. The latter carried a bayonet at his side, but he seemed taken all aback by the suddenness of the affair.

"Pshaw!" said Inglehardt, with quiet scorn, taking up and tapping his snuff-box—"you will still be a fool, Joel Andrews. Do you suppose if I wished for your worthless life that I would suffer you to stand for a moment? Put up your weapon; and do you, Brownlee, take yourself off for a while. I do not want you."

"Bill Graham has come in from below, sir——"

"Well, let him wait."

Brownlee was retiring when Inglehardt called him back.

"Stay," said he—"send Graham up. I will finish with him first."

Brownlee went out, and Graham the next moment came in—another stout forester.

"Well, Graham."

"Conlter's gone, sir, gone up and across South Edisto. He went yesterday, they tell me. He was about Chevillette's till night afore last, was then seen about the Poe Settlement, afterwards pushed off for Cannon's. Fry and Nathan both report his troop at fourteen or fifteen men."

"Fourteen or fifteen men! We can manage them, I think. Have you anything farther to report, Graham?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Well, go below, and remain with Brownlee. I shall probably call you after a while."

"And these fellows do your scouting, cappin?" said Dick of Tophet, after the other had departed, with something of contempt in his speech.

"Yes! Could you do better, Dick?"

"Couldn't I?—and that's 'the Trailer' with me, who's worth a dozen of sich chaps."

"The Trailer! Dy you mean Brunson?"

"Jest so! He's worth a dozen of 'em!"

"And is he with you?"

"He's not far off."

"Ha! very good. And what have you to say for yourself."

"Well, I've got to say that I'm mighty hungry, and I want some good clothes."

"Faith you do; you have been rolling in the briers for a month, I fancy, and your desire is to be well fed, and decently clad, that you may look the better in the rope."

I hain't got the feeling of rope about my neck this time, cappin."

"But you deserve it. You are a deserter from the arms of his majesty."

"I knows it."

"You have been serving in the ranks of Marion."

"Yes, I sarved them in sich a way that they made the rope ready for me on the Santee, and ef twarnt for the old devil's good help, I'd ha' been run up to a swinging limb, without a sign of a jacket on me."

"Why did you leave us?"

"Well, that little slaughtering business, which was all a haccident, as I may say, the killing of old Gregson and his wife."

"And wasn't that enough to hang a dozen such fellows as yourself. You plundered and murdered the people that gave you supper and a bed."

"Pshu, cappin, that ain't the way to name it. The old man swore agin me for robbing him."

"And you did rob him."

"'Twant no robbery! I jest took a little change of clothes that I wanted, and that he hadn't much use for, and there was a little money in the pockets. I warn't to know that. And the old fellow set upon me like a mad-dog, and I down'd him."

"He had no weapons."

"I don't ax that question when a fellow takes me by the throat, cappin."

"But the wife—you stabbed her."

"Well, she flew at me too. There was them two upon me one, and they pulled and hauled me about as ef I was nobody. Flesh and blood can't stand everything."

"Joel Andrews, flesh and blood find such deeds as yours a hanging matter, even in war-time."

"Well, I know you ain't a-gwine to hang me for that business. Why, cappin, it's high time that it was clean forget. It's a year old, by this time."

"And what have you been doing since in the way of burning, and robbing, and slaughtering?"

"Well, cappin, I don't care to be talking of sich little matters, and thar's no use for it. Least said's soonest mended. You see me here now, willing to make up and jine you, and sarve the king once more, and do good service."

"Until you run again! No! no! Joel Andrews, there's no trusting you. I'm afraid you've come to be hung."

"Not this time, cappin. A born rascal, like myself, is a lostle

too useful for you now to give him up. 'You're a-wanting me, at the bottom of your soul, this very minute."

"You are a born devil, Andrews."

"Well, I ain't so sure but it's the better for me, considerin the sort of people I hev' to sarve."

"The father of lies is certainly your father."

"Edsackly; yet I makes a good use of the truth when I kin get it. I've got some truth now that you'd like to hear, cappin."

"Ah! you are for making terms for your life, Dick."

"Not so, cappin; I'm for making tarms for sarvice, and employment, and a handsome payment. I knows very well, the valley of what I've got to tell you; and, I reckon, you knows me well enough to be sure that I wouldn't ha' been so quick to put myself into the halter, of I hadn't something to say that would spell me out of it and something more. So, jest let's come to the marrow of the matter, right away, and jest you say that all's safe, and that I shall hev' a little of the king's kine [coin] in my pocket, and his picture to swear by in the ranks, off and on duty, and I'll fill your ears with a wagon-load of intelligence, sich as none of your green scouts could gather for you in a year of Sundays."

"Well, let's hear your intelligence."

"Is it a bargain, cappin?"

"I suppose so! Perhaps you won't hang this time, though hanging is as surely your doom, Dick, as if you were born to it. Still, I have no wish to play Jack Ketch for you."

"It's a long road to the sea, cappin. I don't think I'm to hang so long as the old devil has something for me to do, and that's jest as long as I'm in the sarvice of a cappin of rangers."

"Don't be sanny, Dick."

"Not for the world, cappin; but say out, up and down, am I to hev' the king's kine again, and to wear his pictur?—that's to say, s'posing I have something to tell you now, that you'd like to hear better, prehaps, than anything else that a man could tell you. You wants my sarvices, I know, and thar's Rafe Brunson, the Trailer, as good a scout as ever stept in mockasin, betwixt here and Tarrapin Heaven. You wants 'em and scouts badly, and thon there's my news, you know."

"Well, Dick, I can't be too hard on you, and if your news is really worth anything—"

"It's worth everything. It'll put Willie Sinclair in your power; and if rope's the word, why you kin give him as many ties of it as you think proper."

"Do that, Joel Andrews, and you shall have all that you ask."

"It's a barg'in, and now jest you listen."

Inglehardt threw himself back in a listening attitude, helped his nostrils to a morsel of Scotch snuff, and motioned his companion to proceed. Dick of Tophet began his narrative. We, who already know, from actual observation, so large a portion of it, will not need to hear the elaborate recital of the ruffian. We shall content ourselves with abridging his report, which was sufficiently full, except in those portions where he had his own most villanous deeds to relate. Of these, there are many not known to us; but these are not essential to our story, and still less to a proper appreciation of his ruffianism. We shall begin with his pursuit of Sinclair.

"We tracked him up to Turkey hill, and thar we lost him How, I don't know; but I never seed the Trailer so off the scent. But we guessed whar he was aguine, for we know'd pretty much that he was a'ter that gal of Travis. Well, we scouted the woods all about Holly-Dale, but we couldn't find the trail. How he did manage to kiver up his tracks thar's no saying. But thar he was."

"He used a boat."

"Well, thar's no tracking a boat in the water, and it's hard pulling one up stream, though an easy matter to go down. But knowing that he would be thar—for when a chap's a'ter a gal, he's apt to stick to the chase—we kept beating about the stamping-ground, sure to hev' him at the last. And we was sworn, both me and the Trailer, to hev' this same Willie Sinclair."

"Why were you so hot on *his* trail, Dick?"

"Look at these burns here, on my back, on my hands, on my feet. Why, I'm in a sort of fiery furnace now, all the time, though they ain't hafe as bad as they was three days ago."

"You don't mean to say that Sinclair burned you thus?" demanded Inglehardt, as the other displayed the scars.

"Well, 'twas all owing to him, and may as well say, right

away, that he did it. 'Twas to git out of his roping that I had to walk into the fire, and lie down on the blazing lightwood."

Here the outlaw, having previously suppressed the account of his attempt on the Sinclair Barony, was compelled to supply his deficiencies. Inglehardt shook his head gravely.

"Hark you, Dick, this is a serious matter, for you, should it reach the ears of Lord Rawdon. Do you not know that old Sinclair is a friend to the royal cause, and intimate with Lord Rawdon?"

Well, I didn't ax about all sich matters, when I thought of the gould and silver at the Barony, and of them hundred gould guineas in the pockets of Willie Sinclair — and he is no king's man, as you know."

"Ah! ha! so you knew that Willie Sinclair had a hundred guineas in his pocket? And how did you know that? I can well understand, now, why you have been hunting him so handsomely."

"In course, thyar was reason for it. In course, I knew about the guineas, and how and where he got them."

Here he had to take another leap, and go back over a chasm in his narrative. The history was gradually unfolding itself clearly to his auditor.

"But I shan't tell you any more of the matter, cappin, ef you're not going to make me safe. You talks as ef you'd hev' to give me up to Lord Rawdon, about that Barony affair."

"If he ever hears of it, and looks after you, Dick, I don't see how I'm to escape giving you up; and I certainly would do so, if he should require it — unless —"

"Well, unless what?"

"Why, unless you took the hint before the halter, and found your way into the swamp, and forgot entirely that the provost was waiting for you under a tree, with a plough-line dangling in his fingers."

"Oh! I see!" — with a chuckle — "wall, I'll hold it as your promise that I'm to hev' a hint of the s'arch whenever they're aguine to begin it."

Inglehardt nodded his head with a smile, and again took snuff.

"Well a nod's as good as a wink to a blind horse. I'm satisfied. — So, as I was a-telling you —"

And the outlaw resumed his narrative, and detailed his unexpected discovery of Sinclair, in the conference with Travis.

"And they've made tarms to meet to-morrow at Holly-Dale. 'We'll be with you thar,' says Sinclair, 'at three o'clock edzackly.'"

Inglehardt listened to this statement with unexampled composure. He tapped his mull quietly, fed the reddened nostril, smiled complacently on the ruffian, and motioned him to proceed; though all the while a raging spirit in his bosom—a rousing fury—was goading him with the mortifying conviction that Travis had outwitted him, and that he was betrayed to his enemy and rival. Neither he nor Dick of Tophet ever fancied that the party destined to meet with Travis was to be any other than Sinclair himself.

Inglehardt sifted well the evidence of the outlaw, cross-examined him closely, and gleaned from him numerous particulars of his progress and discovery, which need not be again repeated. He rapidly formed his own plans as he listened.

"And now, cappin, I must hev' a little ready-money. Look at my clothes. I hain't had a full feed for a week; and as for a sup of Jamaica, the sweet critter is a parfect stranger to my lips."

In silence, Inglehardt rose, took a bottle of rum from his closet, pointed to a glass and bade the other help himself. Then, as Dick drank, he wrote a billet which he handed him.

"Take that to Elbridge. You will find him at Baltozegar's. He will provide you with clothes. Here are two guineas. Use them sparingly; the commodity is scarce, and will be scarcer, unless we can get the hundred which Sinclair carries in his pouch."

"Ah! I don't reckon he carries it about with him all the time. He's hid it away, I'm jubous, when he went to Turkey hill."

"Tell me, Dick, how was it, that, hating him as you do, and knowing of this money, you didn't shoot him down where he sat, when he talked with Travis. It would have pleased me quite as well, had you left me nothing to do in this matter."

This was said very quietly and mildly, without the slightest show of passion or vindictiveness.

"Wouldn't I hev' done it, ef thar had been been a decent chaince. But look at them dirty little puppies"—casting a pair of pistols on the table—"and say ef one would be sensible to take a risk on sich we'pons, at fifteen paces, agin two men, and one of them sich a man as Willie Sinclair?"

"But you have your knife besides."

"Yes; but it's a word and a blow with Sinclair; and I've had the weight of his fist upon my ear once a'ready. I tell you, big man as I am, and tough as an old alligator, I went down under his fist like a great bullock under the axe of a butcher. He's a most powerful fellow in the gripe, and I know'd them pistols worn't worth at over five steps. Then agin, I thought we'd have him sure enough to-morrow, ef he keeps his word to Travis."

"Ay, so we may have him; and I trust he will keep his word. You say he has no one with him?"

"None that we could get the wind of. He's sartinly got no troopers. We left St. Julien crossing the Santee with all the corn and cattle he could gather up."

Well, go and get your clothes and supper, and return to me in one hour. I shall see that you have immediate employment. We must have the Trailer in. Can you find him?"

"Oh! yes, after a sign. We agreed on one afore we divided. Two hours will help me to pick him up."

"I shall employ him also. Enough for the present. Away now, and supply yourself. Let me see you within the hour—and—Andrews—see that you keep sober."

"Jest so, captain, and ef I'm not to drink out of doors, I reckon you'll not think it onreasonable ef I wets my whistle agin afore I go."

And he coolly helped himself to a second and very potent stoup of the Jamaica. Inglehardt beheld the measure of the potation taken without any apprehension. He knew what that arid soil could receive without being flooded.

Inglehardt was alone in his chamber.

"So, Captain Travis, we at last fully understand each other. Now, at least, I fully understand *you*. You have embraced my enemy. You are now my enemy. Fool! you believe that rebel ion is to triumph. You are for making terms with rebellion. You

would secure your spoils. But you shall do so through me only and at one price. Bertha Travis shall be mine—she shall never wed with Willie Sinclair. I will bring you both to my feet, whence neither shall rise in safety, but to satisfy my desires.

"I have you now!

"Sinclair too in my power! He shall die. Why didn't this rascal shoot him down even where he sate. Cowed! cowed by a buffet! But the game is still in my hands."

And his plans were all arranged by the time that Dick of Tophet reappeared. He was now clad in the dark green uniform faced with red, of the corps of mounted rangers which Inglehardt commanded. He carried a dragoon sabre, with pistols of larger calibre than those he had worn before. A shaggy cap of fur, too heavy for the season, formed a part of his equipment; and cap in hand—resuming the more respectful department of the soldier to his superior, he waited orders.

These were given, without delay, and he was despatched in less than half an hour, on a mission, which involved the finding and employing of Bruñson, the Trailer, and a further duty which they were to take together.

We are not yet permitted to know what are the plans of Inglehardt. They must develop themselves. Enough to know that he was subtle, cool, calculating, vigilant, taking no rest, no respite, while the game was in progress. He was busy all night, and threw himself down for a few hours' sleep only when the day was near its dawn. His force, we may mention, with late additions, had grown to thirty troopers, all told.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SMILES AND SUNSHINE—BLOWS AND BONES.

THE game of war, unlike that of chess, admits to greatly the interposition of fortune, to leave skill, however admirable, any security from vicissitude. It was a wise superstition of Sylla, which made him ascribe all his successes, however great, the exercise of his own genius, courage and caution, to the favors of the fickle goddess. The wise man will always thus make due allowance for those caprices of fortune against which it is not possible for any foresight to provide. As he will leave nothing to Fate which can be encountered by judgment and precision, so will he rise above the reverses which are apt to flow from conditions over which he can exercise no control. He will suffer himself neither to forget his prudence in success, nor sink into despondency from failure. The soul for the great struggle implies always great equanimity of temper and a cheerful fortitude.

The players at this game of war in our humble legend, Sinclair and Inglehardt, have placed their men, decided upon their game, exercised the *coup d'œil* with ample and deliberate vision, and have staked very considerable issues upon the result. We are to understand that each has made his arrangements for the conflict according to his resources and his best ability, and these have been put in motion, in accordance with the degrees of knowledge, which they severally possess, of the conditions under which they work. It is not the least difficult feature in this game of war, that *the facts* are so rarely to be grasped with certainty and entireness by any military genius. Inglehardt, assuming, according to all the information he could obtain, a certain state of things for Sinclair, has made himself, in his own notion, very sure of the result. He has omitted none of the precautions which could make the results certain. And

this, too, without any open display either of his objects or resources. His troop has disappeared from the immediate vicinity of Orangeburg. His preparations have been also made for his own personal departure—at a certain hour. Meanwhile, he surrenders himself up to apparent idleness. He lounges about the house of the widow Bruce, with an air of lassitude which seems to deprive him of all his energies. He expects a visiter, in fact, and would have him suppose that nothing has undergone any change in his feelings, his purposes, his conduct. He is, to the last, a creature full of stratagem. He is playing his game even while he seems drowsing over it.

And what is Sinclair about? At present he is not in the field, that we can see. He has eluded our vision. But, knowing him as we do, we may take for granted that his game occupies all his thought—that he is somewhere, in some quarter of the field, making his preparations also—exercising the uttermost forethought—providing against possible reverses—bringing all his faculties to bear against the coming necessity. He, too, has his stratagems, but they contemplate only single objects. They are not complicated like those of Inglehardt. He prefers the open to the sly game—the manly to the merely cunning. His anxieties are great—greater than those of Inglehardt, since he has a greater stake in the game. He stakes, on the issue, other purposes than those which simply affect himself! Let us suppose him at work, as he ought to be, and leave him for the present to his secret operations.

What visiter does Inglehardt expect? Whom does he desire to delude with an appearance of apathy, which is so totally untrue to what he has done, and what he contemplates doing, that day? He contemplates another meeting, and trial of wits, with Travis, before those revelations are finally made which shall strip both parties of the mask.

And what of Travis? He has risen from a sleepless couch full of anxieties. He feels how much he also has at stake, in the game which is to be played to-day. His night's reflections have tended greatly to inspire him with the anxieties which oppressed Sinclair, and to make him feel the impending peril to his fortunes. He is somewhat touched too, by the reflection that his selfishness has been exacting; and that, in holding

Sinclair to the arrangements for the interview assigned for the afternoon, and under threatening circumstances, he has been unnecessarily tenacious of his own objects, to the great hazard of other parties. But a life of selfishness is not to be rebuked in a moment. He has been a hard and exacting man always; and he silences his self-reproaches, with the reflection that it is too late now to amend his fault. That it is now impossible to see Sinclair and make other arrangements.

But his reflections have made him grave; and secretly they have somewhat tended to the growth of a more trusting faith and more generous impulses in his heart. Having eaten breakfast in silence, he orders his horse, and calls Bertha Travis into his chamber. There he produces a little tin case which might contain a dozen sheets of paper folded compactly. He holds it in his hands for a short space in silence, as if doubtful of his purposes. Bertha gazes on him with anxiety. Travis was a person of a hard nature, not easily moved to exhibit his emotion; still less was he given to show any despondency of spirit, even in moments of reverse and disaster. The unusual depression of mood under which he labored had arrested the anxious attention of both his wife and daughter while he sat at table. This depression was now so much more decided that the girl could not forbear referring to it, and asking the reason. He answered her:—

"I am about to ride down to Orangeburg, where I trust, in one hour, to finish all the business I shall ever have with Richard Inglehardt and the British commissariat."

"I am so glad, father."

"Yet something depresses me, Bertha—something like a presentiment of evil. I must go. This is the day for my monthly closing of accounts, and I must not be absent from my post, lest it lead Inglehardt to suspicion. You know enough to understand that he has cause of suspicion. You know him too well, and his objects, not to understand that, with him, to suspect is to watch, and follow, and if need be, strike. In brief, I am not sure of my ground, and events, of the highest importance, are ripening to-day, which, if successful, will relieve me of *him* —relieve me of many anxieties besides—and relieve me of all future connection with the British army. As a matter of course,

my future hope must depend upon the success of the whigs. It is due to myself, my child, to assure you that my present decision has been mainly taken because of your relations with Major Sinclair. But for these, I should never, perhaps, until too late, have had my eyes opened to the *rights* of the American cause, and to its probable success. The desire to see you happy, with a man whom I honor, as much as you love, has unsealed my vision, and taught me better lessons of my country. It is probable that Inglehardt, whom I have long baffled, is partly the possessor of my secret policy. I would save you from him, even if I should not save myself; for his is the very soul of treachery, and, I may find myself in his grasp at the very moment when I flatter myself I am wholly out of it. Now, I wish you to pledge me solemnly, whatever shall happen to me—no matter what you hear—no matter what *my* situation, that you will never marry *him!*"

The girl smiled as she replied:—

"Surely, my father, that needs no pledge—no solemn promise. I know no being whose presence I so much loathe, as that of Richard Inglehardt."

"I believe it—I know it; and I know that, with a free choice left you, there could be no danger that you would ever place yourself in the power of so cold-blooded and selfish a tyrant. But you may not be allowed a choice. There may be situations in which you may be placed, in which you may deem it a duty to sacrifice yourself for others—sacrifice your own heart—for others; for a father's life, for example."

"Oh! surely, my dear father, there is no danger which now threatens you."

"No! perhaps not! Danger, no! None, at least, which does or can do more than threaten. But who is secure—who can be secure—at such a time as this, and in the present condition of the country? Danger is all about us, more or less threatening of aspect. We are between two fires. There are two great combatants in the field, both insisting upon our allegiance, both able to hurt, neither quite strong enough to protect us. In such cases the wise man takes all the precautions that he can, and with the best, still feels that his prospect is everywhere clouded with uncertainty. We are in a perilous con-

juncture now, and great events are pending, in which one of the ships must go down. Which? I have endeavored to steer my way in safety, more with regard to my family than myself. I have determined now upon a course which involves much uncertainty; a course which must make this man Inglehardt a decided enemy."

"He is not your friend now."

"He is no man's friend; but there's no strife between us; we are on terms; but such only as belong to selfish objects. He finds me useful—would make me profitable—aims at your hand—or, rather, at the fortune which he supposes you will inherit. But I should writhe in my grave, Bertha, did I know that he were the possessor of either."

"Never fear, dear father! I loathe and detest him."

"Yet women have been compelled to marry the very object of their loathing."

"Never shall the case be mine."

"Remember, Bertha, I hold this as your solemn pledge, as it were above the grave. I shall expect you to keep it whatever may happen. Whatever you hear—if tidings are brought you that I am in the hands of my enemy—in chains—threatened with death—a sudden and a shameful doom—nay, should you get a letter from my hand requiring you to wed with Richard Inglehardt, as the price of my life and safety—heed it not! Be sure that it is a forgery, or that it has been wrung from me by tortures which have left me incapable of a true thought, or an honest desire."

"Oh! my father, why conceive these fearful things?"

"No matter! You will heed and obey my present wishes. You will cling to the pledge you make me now. You will never wed with Inglehardt. Nay, so soon as Sinclair asks your hand, promise me to give it him. I could die cheerfully to-morrow were I sure that you were his wife, and safe in the honor of his name. Do I have your promise, Bertha?"

"Dear father, it is easy to make it. My heart has long been his—his wholly."

"Enough! It is your pledge to me at a moment, Bertha, when I may be speaking to you from the grave."

"Do not entertain such gloomy thoughts."

"I am no longer a young man. I am engaged in perilous enterprises. I have fearful enemies. Even now I ride to Orangeburg to meet with Inglehardt. His policy is not easily fathomed. He feels that you hate him. He knows that I do. If he suspects that I am about to free myself utterly from his control, it is difficult to say what he will not attempt."

"Why go, then? why put yourself into his power? why not at once join Willie Sinclair, and let us all fly across the Santee—now, this very day, this hour?"

"Easier said than done! No! I must see through this day here, on the Edisto—close it if possible at Holly-Dale. To-morrow—but sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. Here is a letter to Sinclair. Take it and this case. Should I fail to be here when Sinclair arrives, give this letter and case into his hands. He knows what to do with them. Your mother has my instructions also. She will put everything into his hands should I fail to appear at the appointed hour. Keep these safely and secretly, and about you. Do not leave the house. Say to Sinclair that I leave everything to him, and have here given him the best proofs that I confide in the magnanimity of the person he will bring with him, to procure for my family the safety which I seek for them; and now, my child, one kiss—one embrace—and leave me awhile with your mother."

The girl threw herself into his arms—threw her arms about his neck, and kissed and clung to him fondly.

"Where's Henry?" he asked. "I have not seen him this morning."

"He has gone on a mission for Willie. He went by daylight this morning."

"Up or down?"

"Up."

"Kiss him for me, Bertha. Love him well! I would like to have clasped the boy once more to my heart."

And—strange sight to Bertha—the big tear grew and glistened in the eye of the hard and otherwise selfish man. Hers were streaming freely. Once more he kissed and embraced her with a nervous fondness, then gently pushed her away.

"Now go and send your mother to me."

With a sudden impulse the girl once more threw her arms

around her father's neck, once more kissed him affectionately, then, as if fearing to trust herself to speak, turned away suddenly and left the chamber in silence. In a few minutes her place was supplied by her mother.

The husband put his arms affectionately about his wife, drew her to his bosom, and looked earnestly and tenderly in her face. They had been wedded nearly thirty years: the alliance between them had been one, which, in spite of his hard and selfish nature, had been productive of a certain and equal degree of felicity — perhaps, in as great, as is ordinarily shared between married people who indulge in no extravagant expectations from life, or from human affections. She knew his frailties, but he had been faithful to her. He had been an indulgent husband and a kind father. His evil aspect had been usually turned away from his household.

"Lucy," he said, "I will not distress you by a repetition of our conference last night. You know the nature of the dangers which I apprehend. You also know that I can not well avoid to meet them. If I face them boldly, they may lose their character of danger. If I skulk them, they become decidedly a peril. But, no more of this. Anticipating the worst, I have come to the conclusion that you must fly to the Santee, to my sister, the moment that you discover that anything has happened to me. Should I fail to return to-day, you must prepare for immediate flight. Sinclair will see to the arrangements; at all events, see to hurrying away the negroes, under a proper escort. We may trust to his honor. More: it is my wish that his marriage with Bertha should take place — if he is willing — as soon as you can learn that I am in bonds or danger from Inglehardt. Were I sure of this marriage, I should be better reconciled to every danger. But I trust everything to Sinclair's honor and discretion. He has both in eminent degree. He is generous and noble. His conduct has shamed mine, and I have to deplore that its effect was too slowly felt to enable me to save him the peril which now threatens both of us equally. The stroke which places me at the foot of Inglehardt, will be one which will descend at the same moment upon his head. Ay, and upon the head of another, whose peril I tremble to think upon. But Sinclair is forewarned, and, I trust, forearmed. At

all events, he is vigilant—a man of great precautions—and, I am in hopes, of resources adequate to the present exigency. There! I have told you all that I now need to say. Remember, you are not to delay in what you do, in the indulgence of vain fears, or as vain anticipations, touching my fate. The moment you find me missing, that very moment, if possible, carry out my instructions. Send off the negroes, and fly yourself with our children. In my letter to Sinclair, I have declared to him my wish that he should marry Bertha, without delay, if the proceeding conflicts with no earnest necessity or important policy of his own. And now, my wife, we part! God bless and keep you safely, whatever fate may befall me!"

The stately, and we may say, the noble old lady was sensibly touched. The present attitude of her husband ennobled him. He was behaving generously—far more than was his wont—far more than we can well conceive from the few facts which we have arrayed in this narrative by which to illustrate his character;—generously, in a readiness to sacrifice himself for his children, at a moment when he might possibly save himself, by their sacrifice. His heart was not wholly the home of selfish passions.

A brief twenty minutes, perhaps, were consumed in this interview between the father and mother, when he emerged, composed seemingly, from the chamber. A fond and lingering look he cast about him over the fair fields and old groves of Holly-Dale. The place never looked so beautiful before. It seemed the very home of peace. Then he quietly mounted his horse, and turned downward, for the road to Orangeburg.

He was gone from sight in a few moments; and, sadly apprehensive—for he had imparted his own presentiments to both wife and daughter—they watched together, for long and in silence, over the route which he had taken.

He pursued his way to the village without interruption; proceeded to his room at Baltezegar's, where he kept his office, and where he destroyed his papers, such as he did not think proper to preserve. These he stuffed into his pockets. Of course, he was private in his office when these duties were performed. Soon he had visiters, and some that he knew were only spies. He met them, and baffled their inquisition with a calm visage.

and the resources of a cool brain and a ready mind. Inglehardt knew, meanwhile, of his arrival; knew of his visiters; guessed at his secret employments, and smiled at his progress. He knew, too, that Travis would be with him in the course of the morning—an hour, perhaps, before he was prepared to return to Holly-Dale. Inglehardt waited with the exemplary patience, but vigilant eye of the spider, who, in his hole, sees the fly circling or loitering about the distant meshes which he has stretched around him, unsuspected, in all directions.

"Keep him in sight!" was his simple command to all his agents. He, meanwhile, showed himself quite at ease; languidly lounging in his oaken chair, in loose trousers, and a linen morning-gown, his pipe well replenished, sending up occasional curling clouds; head thrown back, and heels upon the table. His eternal snuff-box lay at hand, open, ready for use whenever he should have a companion. He was thus habited, and *posed*, when Travis sought him, which he did about twelve o'clock.

"Ah! my dear captain, how are you? And how is that excellent lady Mrs. Travis—and how is the fair creature of my constant thought, your daughter?"

This was said drawlingly, with a languid smile upon the speaker's lips, and an air of the most perfect complacency.

"D—d puppy!" was the self-spoken feeling of Travis, who yet replied quietly as if totally unruffled:—

"Pretty well; a little oppressed in this hot weather."

"It is growing terrible. I can hardly endure it, I am dreaming nightly of a siesta upon an iceberg. No breath of air here last night. I am in the wrong chamber. I must certainly see Bruce to-day, and get another room. A sleepless night is followed by a drowsy day. I am not well awake this morning—have done nothing—can do nothing. Yet, I have enough to do. I ought to be stirring to see after that rebel. Coulter. Yet, the very idea of marching in this hot sun is terrible. By the way, do you hear anything of the fellow?"

"Not a syllable!"

"I fancy he has gone toward the Savannah. Yet I can gather no intelligence. I must certainly be moving, yet dare not with my awkward squad. I must get these ungainly fel-

lows into something like military order, before I can hope to make a successful dash with them. In a week, perhaps—"

Here he paused, and stirred his pipe and replenished it.

"He talks too freely; all at once," was the thought of Travis. "He means mischief." But he said nothing to this effect; barely asked after the news, and responded in sympathy to his companion's complaints about the weather; and then, practising after Inglehardt's subtle fashion, he added:—

"I dread the thoughts of taking the sun homeward at my usual hour, and shall probably stay till the cool of evening."

"Right!" said Inglehardt. "I shouldn't be persuaded to that ride, on such a day as this, for a hundred guineas. I am half dead with the heat in the shade—here even, where you see there is an eastern exposure. But what's the hour?"

"Twelve by the sun!"

"Heavens! and I am hardly awake! and can't wake. You see my *deshabille*. What is to be done? It is impossible for me to do anything till evening; yet my ragged rascals ought to be seen to."

"Where have you got them?"

"Somewhere in the woods. I left it all to Fry. The little rascal is a sort of salamander—don't mind heat at all—rather loves it, I think. Last night, I found him dancing, with a dozen women in the camp, to the music of the old fiddle of Cato Cusack."

"Has that old African turned up again?"

"Yes! Heaven knows where he has been for the last six months. But there he was last night, lively as ever, sitting upon the end of a whiskey-barrel, and going 'the Black Joke' at race-horse speed, while Fry was leading off with the fattest and yellowest sandlapper of a woman I ever saw. Where the women came from, all of them, I can not guess; but there they were, merry as monkeys, if not quite so active, sweating away their ill humors, in a motion that almost overcame me with horror. I perspired at the very sight of their fury."

"I thought Fry too severe an orderly for such indulgences in camp."

"He is strict enough on drill; but, as he says—'what's to be done? Drill's over; danger's distant; we must keep the

fellows in a good humor! When I asked him where the women came from—he answered, pertly enough, 'Why, captain, we all think from heaven, since they make us so happy while they stay!' Happy in a sweat and stew; for I fairly felt myself steamed to faintness in the spectacle. Faugh! I sweat with the remembrance. But the exercise was not a bad one for the troop. Let them complain of heat on duty if they dare! I did not discourage them, but sent them the materials for a bowl of punch, and left them happier than ever. Fry tells me, this morning, that they kept it up all night. They are, of course, fit for nothing to-day."

"Now," thought Travis, "this is all a lie—a mere invention—meant to blind me. I don't believe a word of it."

But he expressed himself very differently.

"Faith, it must have been a curious sight. Such a night too. Where the d—l could these women have come from? Not the village?"

"No! not that I know. They looked like nobody that I had ever seen. Yet they seemed to know me. But foul weather brings out very strange birds. You say it's twelve?"

"Yes! it was just twelve when I came."

"Let us have some punch, Travis. Nothing like rum punch for hot weather. Come, you do the thing better than I. You have the knack of it. Make a good stoup for us both. I would drink anything which would put a little more life into me. I have no more energy in such weather as this, than a snake in December."

Travis made the punch, and drank—but he observed that the other only tasted the beverage, for which he had expressed so much unctuous appetite, and set it down beside him. He took snuff in preference, and there was a pause in the conversation. At length, Inglehardt said: "Well, Travis, when am I to visit Holly-Dale? Shall it be to-morrow?"

"As you please."

"You have broached our suit to the fair Bertha?"

"Yes."

"And—she does not frown?"

"I trust that Bertha will show herself submissive to her father's wishes."

"If not genial to mine! Well, I must be content. She knows me not. She will think better of me with better acquaintance, and, after marriage. I make no question that love will come in to the support of duty. To-morrow then, Travis, I may hope to see her. She will then receive me. Meanwhile, my dear good father-in-law, that is to be, make the way as clear as possible. Of course, you have suffered her to understand the necessity of this union?"

"She is fully informed, Inglehardt, of my wishes."

"Ah!—and she does not fly out—does not wear the sullens; She smiles, I hope."

"All I can say is, Inglehardt, that the dear child will prove submissive to my will. I can not promise you her heart. I do not deceive you, no more than she seeks to deceive me, that she would prefer another. But enough, if I repeat that she will yield herself to what I require."

"To-morrow then! To-morrow!"—and, with the slightest smile upon his features, Inglehardt fed his nostrils from the snuff-box.

Travis rose to depart.

"What! Whither would you go, and at this hour? not to Holly-Dale surely. Why, man, you will drop upon the road."

"No! I think I shall order my dinner at Baltezegar's at three. It is too hot for riding. Besides, I have some matters to settle at my office, which will keep me to that hour. It will suffice if I reach Holly-Dale by dark."

"You are wise! A hundred guineas should not tempt me to take the road at this hour."

And, with some more talk, in which each sought to mystify the other, they separated.

"Cunning scoundrel!" muttered Inglehardt, as the other left the house—"he fancies that he blinds me. But I shall have eyes on him at every turning."

Travis, meanwhile, took his way to Baltezegar's.

"Jack," said he, "let me have a dinner here at three o'clock—dinner for *two*, remember."

That he had given this order, reached Inglehardt in twenty minutes after.

"Dinner for *two*, and at *three* o'clock. Who can the other

be? Can he be serious? His game may be a deeper one than I suspect. At all events, it shall not change my plans. He is secure, whether he goes home, or stays here. This day shall unmask his batteries as well as mine. The scheme shall stand as it is. Travis may dine here, yet Sinclair, not the less, dine at Hollydale. I shall have him there, whether Travis stays or goes. Have him!"

And the heretofore languid speaker, to whom the weather had been so oppressive—who would not take the road at that hour for the world, proceeded to gird himself up for action. Having dressed himself for the saddle, he stole out of the house, by the back-door, into the yard, and made his way to the stables. There he met one of his rangers, as if awaiting him.

"Have my orders been obeyed, Elias?"

"Yes, sir; the men are all gone with Sergeant Fry. None remain, sir, but myself and Witsell, as you bade."

"Good! Has my horse been taken into the swamp opposite?"

"Witsell has him there, sir, with his own and mine."

"Is the boat ready?"

"Ready, sir—hidden among the bushes above the bridge."

"Do not leave this place then, till you hear from me."

Meanwhile, Travis chatted with Jack Baltezegar on indifferent affairs, or such as seemed to be so to the honest landlord.

"Inglehardt has picked up a clever troop, he tells me."

"I reckon over thirty men, and pretty clever fellows some of 'em."

"They must have had rare doings at the camp last night—dancing 'till daylight. But where did all the women come from? Are the girls of the village in the habit of dancing in a ranger's camp, all night?"

"What! our girls! Never a one of 'em. It's not easy to get 'em there even in broad daylight, and when they're a drilling. But what camp are you speaking of?"

"Inglehardt's."

"Where is it? He's moved his troop off into the swamp more than two days. Except Fry, the orderly, 'Lias Barnett and Tom Witsell, and, perhaps, a small scouting party that came in by day-peep this morning, he's got nobody here."

"Isn't that imprudent—now that Coulter's about?"

"Well, there's no saying what's imprudent, or what is not, with Cap'n Inglehardt, he's so knowing. But it's hard to catch him napping, and if Coulter should make a dash at the village, I reckon 'twould be through ambush that's set for him. It's hard to catch such an old weasel asleep."

Travis picked up some other items, all of which tended to confirm him in the opinion that Inglehardt was subtly working against him, and that the sooner he should take his departure the better. But this required some nicety of management. Repeating his directions to Baltezegar, touching the dinner at three, he jumped on his horse, and rode up to the jail, where there were some Irish prisoners in safe-keeping, charged with mutiny and strong drink, and for whom he had been required to furnish clothing. He saw the jailer, and spoke with him awhile, then rode off, rounded the jail, and got into the cover of the woods on the south, whence he moved round, making a complete circuit, mostly under cover, of fence, house and thicket, till he found himself in the swamp below the bridge. Hence he felt his way up, still in the swamp thicket, till the bridge was reached, when, looking out carefully in the direction of the village, and the coast seeming to be clear, he boldly emerged from his shelter, crossed the bridge, and dashed upward in a canter, which soon left his enemies—all of whom he knew—in the rear.

But ten minutes after he disappeared from sight, Richard Inglehardt, in the uniform of his troop, sword at his side and pistols in his holsters, emerged from the thicket accompanied by two troopers.

He smiled pleasantly as he said:—

"We may walk our horses for a while, men, and leave our friend to make use of all his advantages."

And they took the way upward in the direction of Holly-Dale, though the troopers knew not whither they were going, or what they had to do. Inglehardt made no unnecessary revelations of his purpose.

Meanwhile Travis sped on without interruption. He was, however, too old a stager to be guilty of the boy-folly of hallooing before he had quite cleared the bush. He knew his enemy,

and knew that the very languor of Inglehardt was an omen of ill—that his smile was a danger—that all his horrors of heat and exertion were mere affectations, and he believed frauds—active employment had somewhat lessened the presentiments of Travis, but had not wholly dissipated them, and though he rode on for three miles without seeing a human being, he was yet by no means surprised or confounded when, at that distance from the village, he found his horse's bridle suddenly seized by a sturdy fellow, who leaped out of the copse, at a short turn of the road, and forced the steed back upon his haunches.

"'Light, cappin," said the voice of the stranger—"we wants you!"

Travis answered with a bullet. His hand was firm, his blood prompt, and at the first bound of the assailant, he had drawn a pistol from his pocket, and fired full at the fellow's head.

"Gimini!" cried the ruffian, "he's cut off my ear!"

At the same instant, and before Travis could draw another pistol, a blow from behind, with a heavy bludgeon, from a third hand, tumbled him from his horse. For a few moments he lay insensible. When he recovered, he found himself in the deepest thicket, his hands and feet bound firmly, his pockets rifled of all his papers, and two men whom he did not recognise standing over him. Before he could quite recover himself, to ask the reason of the outrage, Inglehardt and his two followers rode into the thicket. The eyes of the loyalist captain and Travis met. Neither spoke. A sweet smile was upon the face of the former. The latter felt too surely the impotence of his anger to allow it to appear in his features. He simply met the gaze of his enemy with an immovable countenance.

"Dinner for two at Baltezegar's, Captain Travis—why are you here? But your companion will wait. I will report at Holly-Dale your engagements for the day. Should I meet Major Willie Sinclair, I shall be most happy to send him on to you. You will find the ride back a warm one. Good morning, Captain Travis, good morning."

Travis could only look at his enemy the vindictive hate which he felt. How he longed for the fabulous power of the Medusan head that he might look his banterer into stone. The loyalist captain smiled complacently in reply to the venomous

glance of his captive. Ere he rode away, he called Dick of Topbet, and Brunson, the Trailer, aside, and said:—

"If you have time for it, before the men can wind their way up, then see that Captain Travis is carried down to Green Bay thicket, and hidden away there till our return. That is the place of rendezvous, remember. But, if time should not serve, leave him here, tied securely and in cover. You need not be careful to turn his eyes up to the sun. Let him lie at ease. You are not to forget the more important commission which I have given you. You are not to engage in any occupation but the one. While I see to the securing of Sinclair, you contrive to carry off the girl. That is the one duty which I assign you. Neglect it for no other. And see that you do it tenderly. Harm her, by word or act, and you hang for it! Beware too how your fingers incline to plunder. You will do nothing of that sort. I will see that your reward hereafter shall compensate your forbearance, which I well know will be the most painful trial of your virtues."

"Vartues don't bother us much, cappin," answered Dick with a grin.

"See that your vices are not more troublesome. Beware how you offend me now. Your own safety depends on your good behavior to-day."

"Good behavior, cappin! that's to-say, ef we does jest what you wants us to do."

"Certainly! your good behavior lies only in your obedience to orders."

"We're to catch and carry off the gal, while you're busy with the major."

"Yes, and to trouble yourself with nothing else—to be diverted by nothing from the one duty. Treat her respectfully, use no ill language in her ears; and, beyond the degree of violence necessary for carrying her off safely, see that you do not harm her. Remember that! But see that she does not escape you! Your life upon it, my good fellows; and if you succeed, look to me for ample rewards."

With these words he rode away, moving still upward, and keeping close in the cover of the woods, on a line equi-distant from the high-road and the river. The two ruffians remained

for a while after he was gone, but without offering to carry Travis down to the Green Bay thicket, which had been declared the place of rendezvous. They contented themselves with seeing that he was securely roped, and with searching his pockets — even ripping up his saddle, in their thirst for plunder, and possessing themselves of the money he had about him, not overlooking his watch, knife, and other trifles. All these were safely disposed of and out of sight. His papers were opened, and scattered about the woods. Dick of Tophet found himself a gainer by a forced swap of horses with his captive, coolly appropriating that of Travis, and fastening the poor hackney of Pete Blodgit in its place, to a neighboring tree.

"Kin we carry him down, Dick, to the bay?" demanded the Trailer.

"Hain't got the time. All the time we've got, I wants you to put upon my ear. The bloody bullet of this varmint hes gi'n me such a mark as will last for ever."

The Trailer proceeded to examine the injury, and employ some rude surgery upon it; Travis being permitted to see the process where he lay; the fierce glance of Dick of Tophet every now and then, at every twinge of the wound under Brunson's fingers, speaking daggers to the captive, which the occasional comments of the Trailer were not calculated to disarm.

"'Twas a mighty close graze, Dick," quoth the Trailer, to his hurt comrade, "as good a hole as ever a sharp knife worked in a sow's ear! And as you say, it's marked you for life! You'll have to put a gould ring in it."

"I'll wring his bloody neck for him, afore he gits out of the wood; but make haste or we'll be too late for the scrimmage."

"Kin we leave him whar he is?"

"Why not? He kaint stir a peg, and if he should whoop who's to hear him? We'll find him hyar, I reckon, safe enough, when we gits back. Look you, you mischievous, bloody, pistol-shooting d—d old skunk of a rebel, do you see that you lies close, and without kicking. I'm a guine up now to captivate your wife and da'ghter, and all the combustibles of your plantation; and before I'm done with them and you, I'll find satisfaction enough to stop up this bloody hole that you've made hyar eternally in my ear. Oh! I'll never forgit you for it.

as long as I can bite or kick, or as long as you've got the flesh for feeling a sharp wiper's tooth a-meeting in you! I'll hev it out of you, in every way, you see. And I'll make you feel it first through wife and da'ghter. And you may think about what's a-going on at home, with my help, and others, while you're hyar, tied neck and heels, and without the arms to keep off the meanest varmints in the woods."

We abridge the blackguardism and the denunciations of the ruffian, who soon after rode away with his companion, leaving Travis to utter solitude, fast-fettered, with scarcely freedom of limb enough to avert his eyes from the glare of the sun, without hope of defence, help, or extrication. What were his reflections? Not altogether selfish. He was humbled, hopeless, in pain, in danger, but, if he thought of his own situation, it was to lament his incapacity to strike for the defence of his wife and daughter The shocking speech of the ruffian had filled his soul with terrors—had taught him what to fear. The hot scalding tears rolled from his eyes, with the sense of his dreary impotence.

"Good God!" exclaimed the wretched man—"what is to become of Bertha—my child—my child—in the power of this infernal tyrant! And Sinclair too, and the great man whom I would bring into this snare! But I thought I had all sure. I took every precaution. Oh! that I were free, if it were only to strike one blow at the head of that arch-villain!"

But why listen to his unavailing regrets? Our anxieties require that we should fly to Holly-Dale, even as his thoughts fly thither, and witness for ourselves those events which, with so much horror, he anticipates.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

HOW THE GAME MAY BE SNARED AT THE COST OF THE HUNTER.

A LITTLE before three o'clock, Major Sinclair crossed the river in the dug-out, having with him a single companion. Having secured the boat under the usual cover, the shady willows that overhung the stream on the edge of the swamp above the headland of Holly-Dale, the two took their course through the thickets until they drew near the dwelling. This they soon approached and entered from the rear, having watched their moment when the coast seemed quite clear, and kept themselves under cover of the foliage as long as it sufficed for concealment. They entered the hall which opened from the passage-way, and found themselves alone. It was the dining-room also, and the table was spread, but no person of the family was present. The ladies were in the chamber of Mrs. Travis, an apartment opposite the hall, and opening in like manner from the passage.

Leaving his companion in the hall, Sinclair stepped into the passage, and had hardly done so when he was met by Bertha. The countenance of the damsel was full of anxiety.

"Have you seen my father, Willie?"

"No! Is he not here? we are but just landed from the river. He was to meet us here at three. It is not quite the hour."

"He is not here," answered Bertha, striving to conceal her uneasiness; "but I hope he will be back in season. He had to go down to Orangeburg this morning—and—and—he seemed very much troubled—very uneasy. Oh! if anything has happened to him."

"Don't be alarmed. What should happen to him?"

"I don't know. But he himself was apprehensive, and gave

me some commissions to you, some papers—here they are—in the event of anything happening to prevent his presence."

"Ah! the papers!—a moment, dear Bertha," as he took the papers and read the letter to himself.

"Now excuse me for a moment. These papers are for another, and the sooner he has them, and examines them, the better. These will set everything right—set your father fairly before the country, and make his future course free. One moment, dear."

"Come back to me. Mother wants to see and speak with you in her chamber."

Sinclair hurried into the hall, and, with a few words, delivered the papers into the hands of his companion. That person was soon seated and busied in their examination. Meanwhile, Sinclair returned to Bertha, and accompanied her to the chamber where Mrs. Travis awaited them.

He found that good lady calm but very serious.

"Sinclair," said she, "I fear something has happened to Captain Travis."

"I hope not. Why should you fear?"

"He has failed to be back at the hour he appointed. I know that he was anxious to be here. He had apprehensions, too, and Inglehardt is as treacherous as a friend as he is venomous as a foe."

"I do not see that there is any occasion for alarm. Inglehardt has every reason to keep on terms with your husband."

"Yes, so long as my husband will keep on terms with him. But you know, as well as I do, that Mr. Travis had determined to break with him."

"But how should Inglehardt know that?"

"It is possible. He is all cunning. Besides, he has his spies everywhere, and Mr. Travis mentioned that he had certainly made one discovery—of which you know—which would certainly make him suspicious."

"That is true! But unless he has discovered much more, the only present result of that discovery must be to make him more watchful."

"And, no doubt, he has been so; and to what other discoveries this watch may have conducted h'm is the question. It

certainly looks suspicious, that, anxious as Mr. Travis was to get back in time to meet yourself and friend, and resolving to do so, he should fail just at this juncture, when his enemy is most suspicious, most watchful, and has most reason to be so. Mr. Travis is usually punctual to his word."

"And yet, my dear Mrs. Travis, a thousand motives, nay necessities, not involving danger so much as duty and a proper caution, may have delayed him. He had to put away and to destroy his papers, had to settle many interests, and small details before leaving Orangeburg—had to secure property—for, you are no doubt aware, that our present relations involved his withdrawal from all affinities with the British. The very fact that he left these papers with Bertha, to be delivered to me in the event of his not coming, showed that he himself anticipated some unavoidable delay, as a probability."

"Ah! Sinclair, he anticipated something more. He was very much depressed, and his mind labored with some gloomy presentiments."

"And well he might entertain some forebodings. His relations naturally involve the idea of embarrassment and danger. But I see not—

Here Bertha interposed:—

"Willie, I heard a horse—horses—I'm sure. Had you not better go, you and your friend, while you have time? Should anything have happened to my father, there's danger to you."

"She is right, Willie. Go! You have the papers! You will see that justice is done to my husband's object."

"If Mr. Travis has fallen into Inglehardt's clutches, it is too late to steal away," said Sinclair. "If he has arrested Mr. Travis, be sure that he has environed Holly-Dale with his rangers."

"Heavens! Willie, and you speak so coolly!" exclaimed Bertha.

"Fear nothing! I have striven to prepare for this contingency, and believe that I am ready. Henry is no doubt on his way, bringing down the troop of St. Julien, and I have despatched a trusty messenger to Coulter to bring up his troop also. They have full instructions in regard to every step that is to be taken. If Inglehardt is really about us, with his

rangers, he has got himself into a snare. From the moment when I conceived the possibility of his seeking me here, I resolved that he should find me, and find me prepared for him. I have endeavored so to provide as to crush him at a blow. Let St. Julien and Coulter reach us in season, and we have the scoundrel in his own meshes. We need but half an hour now."

"Ah!"—there were steps without—"you will not be allowed that half hour. There is certainly a tramp of horses, and—the door opens."

So it did—the door of the passage—then a footstep was heard, a light deliberate footstep, the tread measured—and the person entering was heard to pass into the hall.

Sinclair, with moccasined feet, stepped noiselessly to the window which looked out upon the court fronting the west. He came back with a slight smile upon his lips, and in a whisper—

"You are right. There are troopers on the edge of the wood. Can you find your way to the upper story, Bertha, without being heard from the hall?"

"Yes! I think so."

"Go, then, and look up the northwest avenue, note the great red oak that stands out in the centre of it, and if you discover a white handkerchief, or anything white gleaming from the boughs, sing cheerily some verse of one of your little musical ballads, so that I shall hear."

All this was said in a whisper. Bertha stole out into the passage and up the stairway, without waking a single echo.

Voices were heard in the hall. Sinclair stole to the door and listened. He returned in a moment.

"Do you think, my dear Mrs. Travis, that you can follow successfully the example of Bertha, and steal up-stairs without being heard?"

Alas! good Mrs. Travis was a lady of dimensions and bulk. She shook her head.

"Well," said he, "bide your time, and on the first sound of struggle or confusion, make your way up-stairs to Bertha, and fasten yourselves in. Leave this fellow to me."

"Who is it, Willie?"

"Inglehardt himself."

"Ah! and you take it so easily."

"Yes! I hope to take him easily."

And Sinclair again stole to the door, stole into the passage and listened. The old lady could hear the voices from the hall, which were earnest but not loud. In a moment, Sinclair was back, and without a word, he snatched up a light coverlet from the bed, and again disappeared from the apartment. Mrs. Travis wondered what he should want with such an agent dealing with such an enemy, and while she wonders, and while the event is doubtful, let us retrace our steps a moment to some of the antecedents of the affair.

Not a quarter of an hour before this, Inglehardt, accompanied by a single trooper, Fry, his orderly, might have been seen in a little thicket crouching behind the dairy. Hither his whistle had summoned a young mulatto, a boy of eighteen, to his presence. This fellow, a servant of Travis, had been long in the pay of Inglehardt.

"Well, Julius, has he come?"

"Yes, sir; he's in the hall now, a-reading papers."

"When did he come?"

"I don't know, sir; I was busy cleaning knife behind the kitchen, and old Molly, the cook, sir—you know old Molly—she's mighty hard 'pon me—"

"No matter about old Molly."

"Well, sir, she was a-moving about, and keeping me at the knives, sir, and I never see when the major come. But when I gone up-stairs with the knife-box, to put 'em on the table in the piazza, I cotch a sight of 'em in the hall, sir, a-setting at the table with papers, a-reading. The room was dark, the winders most shut in, 'cause of the hot weather."

"Well, well! he is there?"

"Safe!"

"Nobody else—no troopers?"

"Never see the huff [hoof] of one, sir, 'cept what you fotch."

"You hear, Fry. Now, work round the house with the troop, and push in when you hear my bugle, but not a moment before."

"Where are you going, sir?"

"To the house."

"What if he makes fight? Sinclair is a powerful, strong man."

The other touched the pistols in his belt.

"I shall be able to manage him with these—at all events, keep him at a distance with them till you can answer my bugle."

"Very well, sir—as you please. But we had better make short work of it, sir—at a dash."

"No! I have another object. Besides, we have him sure. With thirty troopers upon him, he can neither fight nor fly with any hope of safety. Away, now, and be in readiness."

The orderly disappeared behind the bushes.

"Julius, was your young mistress with him?"

"Not when I look, sir. She been up-stairs in he room I reckon. But I 'spec' [expect] she's down with 'em now, onless he gone up to her."

"Why, scoundrel, you don't mean to say that he goes up to her chamber?"

"Don't know, sir; but they's mighty loving, when they gits together," and the mulatto grinned his own vicious nature as he spoke. Inglehardt looked at him with an expression of disgust.

"Mighty loving, are they?"

"Oh! there's no saying how sweet they is to one another."

"We shall dash the sweet with bitter. Go, now, and let me see you where I told you, and when."

The boy disappeared. Inglehardt lingered, as if in thought, though looking around him as if in expectation also. Suddenly the bushes parted behind him, and the grim, disfigured visage of Dick of Tophet showed itself.

"Ah! you are there? Well, see that you do your work effectually; and, hark you, Joel Andrews, no trespassing of any sort."

The other grinned only in reply. Inglehardt found it necessary to rebuke the grin with a stern look and speech.

"Hark you, Dick;—closer—here!"

The fellow drew nigh. Inglehardt, fixing his eyes upon him, said, in the lowest and sweetest tones:—

"If you disobey the slightest of my injunctions, Joel Andrews, you shall hang for it. Do you hear? Look me in the face, and comprehend, if you can, by what you see, that I have sworn it!"

"Oh! cappin, what's the use of being oneasy? Don't I know what to do? Jest you fix the major, and I'll save the gal, and be as kearful as her own mammy. I'll wrap up my paws in a silk 'Ingy,' whenever I lays hands on her."

Inglehardt did not exactly relish the tone of his subordinate; but as for subduing such a ruffian to sober paces, whether of soldiership or humanity, he well knew that the hope was out of the question. He could only renew his injunctions as earnestly as possible, and in those sweet equable tones which all who knew him well understood, were significant of his sternest moods, and leave the event to the Fates. They were hurrying him onward. He had no more time to lose.

Waving his hand expressively to Dick of Tophet, and the Trailer, who hung back in the bushes, his head just visible above them, Inglehardt immediately stole away in the direction of the dwelling, the approach to which prompted his reflections to return to a channel which had been opened by the salacious suggestions of the mulatto. The voice of Inglehardt was half audible as he murmured, going forward somewhat quickly:—

"I shall surprise him in her arms, no doubt—lipping it sweetly—turtle-doves of Holly-Dale—little dreaming of what awaits them! Ha! well, it has been long delayed, but I shall enjoy my triumph now. *Him* naught shall save! and her father's life hangs on her compliance! Proud girl, I shall give you this day a lesson—teach you how to scorn the pretensions of Richard Inglehardt!"

It was his footstep that Bertha heard in the piazza, his that entered the passage—the hall! It was his voice that reached the ears of the party assembled in the chambers of Mr. Travis. We see what were his expectations, when he penetrated the dwelling—what and whom he expected to discover in the hall. He was somewhat surprised to find a stranger—not the rival whom he sought.

The stranger sat alone, poring over a pile of written papers. Inglehardt did not immediately distinguish who he was. Beheld at some distance—for the stranger was on the opposite side of the long dining-table—his features and person were not clearly discernible in the doubtful light of the half-darkened

apartment; but a single glance sufficed to show that he was not the person whom the intruder sought. He paused for a moment, apparently at a loss. His own presence did not seem to be suspected by the stranger, who appeared wholly absorbed by his papers. He sat calm and grave, noting, with a pencil, certain points in the manuscripts before him—all of which were now emptied out of the case which had contained them, when left by Travis;—with certain additions from the pockets of their present possessor, they made quite a pile upon the table.

The stranger was of noble appearance—tall of person, well formed, and of medium fullness and proportions, neither stout nor slender. His head was broad and lofty, cheeks firm, chin full, the jaws marked by breadth and significant of power. His eyes were large and dark, eager and searching. His mouth, well-defined, was habitually rigid of compression, giving an idea of decision, promptness, and great resolution;—tempered, however, by the frankness and ingenuousness of an ardent temperament, and a genius at once magnanimous and ambitious. His hair, combed back, powdered, and tied behind, in the absurd style common to the gentry of that period, contributed to the full development of his features, and, perhaps, somewhat tended to increase the general expression of sternness, almost of severity, which was the one most natural to his aspect. He was dressed in black, without uniform or ornament, in the fashion of the professional people of the time, with ruffles at wrist and bosom, and a rapier at his side. This weapon, however, as he sat at the table, was not perceptible to the intruder, who had every opportunity for examining him. The stranger was too much absorbed to note his presence, even to hear his footstep. His mind was full, his imagination busy, his brow clouded with thought.

After surveying him awhile in silence, the eye of Inglehardt gradually becoming reconciled to the imperfect light, he smiled with a grim satisfaction. He had been disappointed, seeking for his rival, to find a stranger, but that stranger was no common prey. Could he succeed in capturing *him*, his fortune was made. The British commandant could deny him nothing. And was he not in his hands?

Inglehardt advanced. The stranger looked up.

"Ha!—well! who are you, sir?"

The loyalist captain did not exactly answer the question, as he replied:—

"I know you, sir—you are John Rutledge, the rebel-governor of this colony! Sir, you are my prisoner!"

Rutledge laughed.

"Ha! indeed! my good sir, whoever you are, you are a blockhead. You neither know me—nor yourself. If you knew either of us, sir, you would know that *I* am not to be made prisoner by you!"

Inglehardt's cheek flushed. He could feel the sentiment of scorn. He, the son of the overseer and grazier, felt the sting of the sarcasm from the born gentleman. But Inglehardt was of wonderfully well-balanced temper. A sting never disquieted him, or deranged his purposes, however much he might feel it.

"Your politeness, sir, will hardly suffice for your safety. I am satisfied that you are the rebel Governor, Rutledge, and I have the honor to be Richard Inglehardt, a poor captain of loyal rangers. My duty to arrest you is fortunately seconded by my power. I do not wish to shed your blood. Will you yield quietly, sir, where you can not resist with safety?"

Rutledge rose, and with one hand proceeded to gather up his papers, his eye still fixed on that of the loyalist captain. The other drew a pistol from his pocket.

"Yield! you say? Yield!"

"Ay, sir, it is your only hope of safety. A single blast of this bugle fills the house with my rangers. They are even now collected in the court."

"Yield! why, my good fellow, do you not see that, as the rebel governor of this state, to yield to you is impossible! Were the whole army of Rawdon at hand I could not yield! Don't talk to me of yielding. John Rutledge a prisoner? no, no! Fall on, if it must be so! The gown against the sword for once. *Cedant arma toga!* I take my auguries from the poet. He shall be *vates* for me in the present juncture."

"Your life shall be safe, sir," said Inglehardt, "but resistance is impossible. Once more, I warn you. Yield, sir, and be assured of good treatment."

"You have your answer!" said Rutledge, cocking his pistol, and keeping his eye steadily upon him.

"Your blood be upon your own head!" answered Inglehardt, raising the bugle to his lips. But, before he could wind it, Sinclair had thrown the coverlet, taken from Mrs. Travis's bed, over the head of the loyalist, enveloping head and shoulders completely; and so suddenly and closely was it drawn, as to prevent the shout with which he would have brought his troopers into the house. The next moment, spite of all his struggles, he was stretched out upon the floor, his head still muffled.

"A cord, Mrs. Travis," cried Sinclair to the lady who made her appearance at the door the next moment, and readily procured and provided the required article. With knee upon the breast of the loyalist, Sinclair slipped a knot about his arms and feet, which put him completely *hors-de-combat*, then lifting him up, as if he were an infant, he bore him into the passage, and thence down the inner steps into the basement, where he laid him out gently upon the floor.

Never was captive so easily overcome—so simply, so suddenly, and so unexpectedly to himself. The process was the only one. The muffling of the head was the only means of security. Could he have wound his bugle, or shouted, his troopers would have rushed into the house instantly, and a few moments only would have been required for the work of destruction. An ordinary enemy, obeying an impulse, would have knocked the loyalist down, or tried to do so; the ready wit of Sinclair found it better to roll him up. This was most effectually done, and the stifled cries of Inglehardt, with all his efforts, could not have been audible without the apartment.

Scarcely had our major of dragoons succeeded in this operation, and in conveying his captive to the basement, when he heard the cheering voice of Bertha Travis, above-stairs, warbling snatches of a popular song. He did not wait for more, but, darting upward to the dining-room, he found Rutledge with pistols ready, his papers put away in his bosom, and his rapier drawn.

"Up-stairs now, governor, up-stairs if you please, with Mrs. Travis, while I secure these doors as quietly as possible. We

need but twenty minutes of respite, and must peril nothing from stray shot or sudden stroke. We shall gather up all these rascals with a little patience."

Such were Sinclair's words—*commands*.

Rutledge tendered his hand to the lady, in the style of one of the courtiers of that day, and the two disappeared up-stairs. Sinclair at once threw the bars into the staples, which secured the entrances to the house, front and rear; then, as the enemy might enter the rooms at the windows from the piazzas, he locked the two doors, opposite each other, which opened into the passage, and hurried up-stairs also. Here, gliding to one of the windows he looked out into the court, taking care not to expose himself.

"Ay, there they are, awaiting the bugle blast of their captain! Well, they shall now have mine;" and with the words, our major of dragoons poured out a lively *tira-la tira-la*, thrice from his bugle. There was then a rush below to enter; and, failing to get in the door, some of the troopers were soon heard clambering in at the windows.

"It will cost them a few minutes," quoth Sinclair, "to break down the inner door, and by that time they will have to turn about for other customers. Ha! do you hear that?"

It was the distant blast of another bugle.

"In five minutes, St. Julien will be here! But they may give us work to do in that five minutes. Governor, with our pistols, we must watch the stairs."

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE MELEE—A CHARGE—FLIGHT—CAPTIVITY.

PROMPT at the summons, Rutledge, then the dictator of South Carolina, to whom the state had intrusted the sovereign discretion implied in the words of his charter—to "see that the republic sustained no harm"—followed the major of dragoons to the post of danger with as little hesitation as the commonest foot-soldier might have shown. Here, the soldier was in command, and the sovereign was submissive. Both held themselves in readiness, and their pistols too, at the head of the stairway; while the troopers of Inglehardt were striving to force their entrance from the hall into the passage.

"An axe! Bring an axe!" was the shriek, rather than speech, of one of them, appparently in command below. Had either of the two above-stairs ever heard the voice of Inglehardt's fierce little red-headed lieutenant, Fry, he would have been at no loss in identifying the speaker. Anon—was heard—

"Stand away! Let Crowell strike!"

And the blows resounded.

At this moment, Sinclair discovered Bertha at his elbow, pale, but firm, and apparently taking position in the ranks, as if in waiting for her share in the fray.

"Back!" cried he—"Back, dearest—you have no business here! Back to your chamber and keep wholly out of sight!"

The poor girl shrank away, thinking the speech the harshest she had ever heard, or expected to hear, from the lips of her lover. But it was no time for mammets. The tilt promised to be any sort but that of loving lips.

The blows resounded more and more heavily below; the splinters were heard to fly from the door; and, after a few more strokes, a rending crash, and a shout, announced the

success of the assailants. The door was shattered, driven from its hinges, and the troopers dashed into the passage. They darted forward—one, two, three!—headlong up the steps.

A shot!—the foremost is stricken down with a bullet through the head! He fell backward, balanced a moment, as it were, revolving in air, then yielded, and rolled over, down between the legs of his companions!

There was a pause—a check—a sensation. Thus suddenly to lose one man out of three or four is apt to cause uncomfortable feelings in the survivors.

"What! do you stop when a man misses a step? on with you! Don't you see he's only scared. Whoop! up, boys! There's but a single man of them!"

So Fry!—and up the troopers bounded once more—two, three, four; Fry pressing behind them with sword and pistol.

Up and down flew the bullets—a little wildly. Another falls. Sinclair himself is grazed. He darts down with his sabre; smites right and left, and hurls one fellow over the banister! The space between the parties reduced, his powerful size and strength, in that narrow passage, render him equal to half a score. Besides, he is on the elevation. He strikes downward, and this is an advantage. Fry, a brave little fellow, confronts him, and his arm, the right arm, drops, hewn clean off at the shoulder with a single sweep of the sabre.

"Oh, my God!" was his cry, "I'm ruined for life!" and he sank down, fainting, at the feet of his enemy, and rolled to the bottom of the steps.

But two men now confronted our major of dragoons—and they shrank—staggered back—down the stairs, and jostled each other, in the struggle, made with backward eyes, to regain the door of the passage—regain their comrades.

Shouts within, and shouts without, confounded their senses. Sinclair kept his ground, midway the stairflight. Rutledge had reloaded the emptied pistols. He himself had discharged a couple, and he now joined Sinclair with the ready weapons. The latter would not suffer him to remain at the position which he himself occupied.

"They are preparing for more deliberate operations," said he—"but deliberation is their death! Do you not hear the

bugles?" Suddenly there is a wild clamor without — a shout — the merry and shrill clamor of the trumpets, and the heavy clangor of the charging horse.

Sinclair rushed up for a moment, and gave a hurried glance, through the half-opened window of one of the chambers, out upon the avenue and court. He beheld the melée — a glance was enough. He rushed down stairs, tore away the bar which secured the outer door, and, waving his broadsword aloft, darted out into the piazza, and down the steps — shouting, at the topmost pitch of his voice, as he came forth: —

"Hurrah! dragoons! over 'em! They are yours! Feed the sabre as they fly! Into them! Through 'em, my brave fellows! You are a match for fifty more such rascals!"

And well did the brave troopers second the encouragement of the major of dragoons, and deserve it! The squad of Inglehardt, taken wholly by surprise, was already scattered. Some darted into the woods below, others for the swamp. Their captain nowhere to be seen — their fierce little Ensign Fry, bleeding helplessly to death at the foot of the stairs in the dwelling — they were without a head, and the members were soon dispersed and broken; all but a group of ten or a dozen, who kept together, and dashed into the upper avenue, relying on their hoofs rather than their broadswords.

But the dragoons were soon upon their haunches. Sinclair himself was now mounted, having seized upon a vacant saddle — a steed that, in his fright and confusion — had actually thrust his nose into one of the basement windows of the house.

The poor beast — not a bad beast either — was that of Fry. Once astride this animal, the spurs of Sinclair soon brought him to the right-about; and he dashed forward with all his mettle, now quite recovered, in pursuit of his flying associates. These, hard pressed, wheeled about, and emptying their pistols full in the face of their pursuers, but without doing much mischief, they prepared for the encounter, *pell-mell*, with the slashing broadsword. Presenting a good force, they completely covered the narrow avenue in which they were overtaken.

"Charge!" cried Sinclair, with all the glad fury of the Hun, raging with battle. But, even in that moment, a voice as loud, and clearer than his own, thundered out, at his very side: —

"Spare them, Sinclair! Remember, they are our countrymen! Let them accept mercy — let them make submission! We will receive them into our ranks! Submit, brave fellows, it is better to live for your country, than to die for a foreign tyrant! Submit and save yourselves!"

It was the voice of Rutledge. He, too, had seized upon a vagrant steed, and was now riding by Sinclair's side — an emptied pistol in his hand, no hat upon his head, his arm waving wide, as was its wont when he thundered in speech — and his lofty person rising to the full majesty of the words which he had spoken.

And the words were as magical as majestic. The loyalists lowered their swords, and made the sign of submission, wheeled into the rear of Sinclair's troop, and became good rebels after a creditable fashion.

However strange the fact, the case was frequent. The wise policy of Rutledge brought back hundreds to the ranks of the country. He knew that the cause had not been well understood at first — that many were beguiled by false counsellors — than many had been driven by injustice into the ranks of the enemy, and that it needed only to take all such, at the happy moment, to persuade, convince, or — subsidise. The victory was won. All but seven or eight of Inglehardt's followers were to be counted upon the ground, or in captivity. The fugitives, dashing into the woods below, which it had been arranged that Coulter's troop was to cover, had thus far succeeded in making their escape. These were to be looked after at a future moment.

Sinclair and Rutledge, with the troopers, now rode back to the dwelling, where some time was spent necessarily in the inspection of the field, in removing the dead from the house, and purging it of its bloody testimonials. Here, it was found that the fierce little Lieutenant Fry, had bled to death; not an unfrequent event where such formidable wounds were given, and in a service which, like that of our partisans, was attended by but few surgeons. Fry was utterly lifeless when his body was examined, but it was still warm. Two others were found slain by pistol-shots — three lay severely wounded in the court, and one killed; seven were slightly wounded, and within the

succor of the simplest surgery, and only some half-dozen of the tory troop remained to be picked up or accounted for.

But where was their captain — where Inglehardt, who had been so securely corded, as it was thought, and muffled up in the passage of the basement? When they came to look for him, he was gone. He had evidently found assistance from other hands than his own, and had escaped. He was nowhere to be found. When, a little while after, the ladies were referred to, they knew nothing. They had heard noises below, but had not ventured from the upper chambers, till Sinclair's reappearance in the court below had reassured them; and even then they had not descended to the lower story.

But we have sources of information beyond theirs, by which to account for the escape of the captain of loyalists. He had a friend capable of succoring him, in one, who, though his creature, was about the last creature in the world to whom he should have looked for help in a moment of danger. But the mouse can gnaw through the meshes of the lion, and Inglehardt's mouser came to his aid at a happy moment.

It happened that, in the very moment when the conflict began, Julius, the mulatto house-servant of Travis, trembling with terror, had crept into one of the basement windows. Here, in one of the darkest places, he crouched in an ague fit, and remained unconscious of everything but the shouts, the shots, the clang of sabres, and the rush of steeds without, until the pursuit of the fugitives by our major of dragoons. Then, he recovered courage to look about him, but not yet to look *out*. He heard a difficult breathing in the passage — a rustling, restless motion — and a feeble voice, half-stifled, crying, at moments, for succor. It was some time before the mulatto dared approach the object of his apprehension, and ascertain the fact, that the prisoner, thus fettered, and half-smothered in the coverlet torn from the bed of his mistress, and wrapped tolerably snugly about his neck, and over his head, was the wily tory whom he had so profitlessly served in this very expedition. With trembling hands the mulatto cut the cords, tore off the bandage, and released the prisoner.

A glance at the field, taken stealthily through the windows, revealed to Inglehardt the whole plan of escape. The troopers

were in pursuit. The negroes had all fled to hiding-places. None but wounded, dying, or dead men were to be seen, and it was just possible to steal out, unnoticed, to the swamp. Thither, accordingly, he determined to fly; and he made the attempt in safety, taking Julius with him. He buried himself as soon as possible, up to the neck, among the thick reeds and willows of the swamp.

Here, he could still, in some measure, be a witness of the scene. He could hear the shouts of victory, the tramplings of the horse, the blasts of the bugle, and then the regular trot of the troop as it passed into the woods below; and, finally, to his great relief, down came the darkening shadows of night over river and forest. Under her friendly shelter, Inglehardt stole out from his hiding-place, making for the river, and designing to swim across. But here he found the boat which Sinclair had employed in his passage to and fro. He gladly availed himself of the opportunity which it offered him, and, having made the boy Julius first enter, he leaped in himself, and allowed the little vessel to drop down stream. The navigation was not intricate, and he knew it well; and when he reached the mouth of Four-mile Branch, he ran the dug-out in, pressed upward as far as the waters would allow, and then put his little vessel in a place of concealment near the banks, closely covered with a matted thicket.

Here he felt himself tolerably safe. It was now quite dark, though the night was clear and starlighted. He was now, he knew, within half a mile of the *bay* thicket, whither he had ordered Travis to be taken, and where he was to be kept, until he should return from his enterprise against Sinclair at Holly-Dale. He never anticipated his own return in his present condition; but, with usual and proper precaution, the same *bay* had been appointed as the place of *rendezvous* for his troopers in case they should be scattered in pursuit or flight. He could soon reach this point, and everything was silent. That he did not immediately attempt it was due to his exhaustion. He was sore from his recent bonds, and wearied, not to speak of a temporary depression of spirits that was quite natural to his reverses. Once he thought of sounding his bugle, which was still about his neck, but he prudently recollected that its summons

might bring down upon him far other visiters than those whom he cared to entertain at present. He concluded to keep snugly in his canoe for an hour, and then venture out to the place of rendezvous. His present place of refuge was favorable to any movement which he might desire to make, enabling him to steal back again to Holly-Dale, should he see fit — and this was to depend wholly upon the number of fugitives which should join him at the *bay* — to return to Orangeburg, should the conquering troop of Sinclair not take the same direction; to put himself across the river, or go still farther down the stream, should the exigency of the case render it necessary that he should increase the distance between himself and his enemy. Inglehardt could meditate his plans coolly still, in spite of his mortifications of flesh and spirit — in spite of the defeat of his objects, and the loss, now felt for the first time, of his pistols, sword and snuff-box. His nose — and it felt the privation — was unfed during the whole of his meditation.

Leaving him to brood above his paddles, and in waiting upon Fate, we return to Holly-Dale.

While Inglehardt had thus been stealing off in security, Sinclair had been busily engaged in reaping the field which he had won, and arranging his plan of future operations. Much had to be done, occupying considerable time, before he could rejoin the ladies. Rutledge required him in consultation, and there was something to be understood in regard to the troop with which the victory had been obtained, which taxed his consideration. This troop was not that of Coulter; was, in fact, only a detachment from that of Captain St. Julien, under the command of Lieutenant Mazyck. St. Julien had been compelled to go, with one half of his force, in pursuit of a mixed body of tories and *black dragoons* (negroes), which had been reported as breaking cover somewhere on the South Edisto; and thither had Coulter also gone with his company, before the summons of Sinclair could reach him. Mazyck, accordingly, had brought with him but twenty-five troopers; but, when we add to these, some thirteen of Inglehardt's squad — raw fellows, but docile, who had accepted Rutledge's offer of pardon for past offences — the thirty-eight, all told, made a body sufficiently strong for present purposes.

Jim Ballou had also come back, from his fruitless search after Coulter, and 'Bram, the negro, had reached the field in season to dash in, after his master, and make his demonstrations in the fight, when it promised to be fiercest. Under Sinclair's eye, and seconding his charge, 'Bram had already shown that he could be a fearful customer. He had some scruples about the prudence and propriety of warfare, unless some dashing cavalier of the white race put himself in the van of battle.

Having seen to his troopers, and ascertained the facts in his situation, Sinclair prepared, accompanied by Rutledge, to revisit the ladies, and relieve their anxieties. They re-entered the house together, and while the dictator remained in the parlor below, our major of dragoons ascended the stairs. He was met midway by Bertha, whom he caught with a loving fierceness in his arms, pressing her lips with his own, before she could apprehend his purpose, and extricate herself from his grasp.

"All's safe, Bertha. We are the masters of the field."

"*Is* all safe?" answered the girl, with anxiety and trembling —"*Is* all safe, Willie? Where's Henry, my brother?"

"Henry, your brother!" exclaimed Sinclair, staggered by the question, and at once reproaching himself for his seeming forgetfulness of the noble boy.

"Is he not here? Has he not been with you?"

"No! no! Good Heavens, Willie, what is become of him? Have you not seen him?"

Yes, to be sure; I saw him when I rode out to charge the enemy up the avenue. I saw him, then, and heard him shouting, and thought he followed me, but, in the excitement of the charge, I lost him; and on my return, seeing no more of him, I concluded he had joined his mother and yourself."

"Oh, Willie! this is terrible! What can have become of him? Go, dear Willie, go seek and find him, and come back soon with him, for mother is in a wretched state of uneasiness. Hasten, Willie, while I go back and quiet her, with a hope that you will find and bring him soon."

Sinclair at once dashed down the stairs, and, in a few words, told Rutledge his new cause of anxiety, in which the sympathies of the latter were deeply interested.

"But *I* must go, Sinclair, you are aware—go at once; I am expected, and hope to meet General Greene to-night. Too much depends upon mere moments now, to suffer me to delay, even though to help in the search for this gallant boy."

"I know it, sir; and, if you please, will despatch an escort of ten men with you, under Lieutenant Masyck, who will accompany you across the river, crossing at Shilling's, which is the shortest rout to Herrisperger's, and going on with you to the meeting with General Greene, if you require it."

"No! no! that will not be necessary. I have my two aids waiting for me at Herrisperger's and they will suffice for escort The road is pretty clear now. We know where Rawdon is on the Congaree, and that Greene's detachment is even now in advance of him. All's safe along my route, and I will send your man back as soon as I reach Herrisperger's. You, meanwhile, see after the boy, and join the army with all despatch. We have active work for all our cavalry below."

"Touching Captain Travis, governor, and his petition?"

"It is granted. Here is the document which gives him indemnity. His papers are valuable to us, and I do not question his fidelity in future. His danger is now from the enemy. His absence suggests the fear that Inglehardt has found him out, and secured him in Orangeburg. Now is the time to dash into the village, empty the jail, where they are said to have some score or two of refractory Irish in limbo, and where Travis is probably laid by the heels also. Be sure, while you are about this business, to secure what remains of the commissariat in Orangeburg. Get all the clothes and munitions that you can; and, by loading your troopers well, and moving promptly up the river, you will be able to join us, before Rawdon can possibly make his way across the country. You will probably find the Irish, whom you emancipate, willing to take arms against their former owners. If so, mount them, and bring them along behind your troopers. Of course, you will search for the boy; but beware that you do not linger one hour too long. You must give up the search, if it delays you over the next twenty-four hours. However painful it may be to you, in your relations with this very interesting family, to forego the search, you are neither to peril your troop, nor embarrass our purposes in any fruitless

waste of time. If the boy is slain, which God forbid! you will find his body, no doubt, in yonder wood. If the fugitives have borne him along with them, they will hardly ill-treat such a child — indeed, will hardly think it worth while to detain him."

"Ah! sir, you know not this cold-blooded scoundrel Inglehardt, or his objects. The father and son in his power, he will hope to establish a fearful hold upon the family."

"But *he* is a fugitive, also."

"He has escaped, and flies, it is true; but he has probably caught the boy in his flight; and, while we were pressing upon the enemy up the avenue, has succeeded in carrying him off. The father's wealth, the daughter's beauty, are both objects of greedy desire with Inglehardt; and father and son in his power, how terrible is the hold which he possesses upon the mother and daughter!"

Sinclair readily conceived the policy of his enemy, from a knowledge of his character.

"It is a cruel prospect to survey, but, I trust, that you exaggerate its dangers. As a fugitive, and pressed by your troopers, Inglehardt's flight must be one of embarrassments, which will probably compel him to cast off his prisoners, assuming that he has them."

"He may brain them first," said Sinclair, with a shudder.

"Hardly, if his purpose be such as you indicate. No! no! my dear fellow, look at the thing more cheerfully. Press the pursuit; urge the hunt and search; be prompt and keen; be quick; do not lose time; and, if you fail to find the boy and his father, at least, your failure will be temporary. My life upon it, Inglehardt will harm neither. His policy demands that he should not."

"But should he give Travis up to Balfour or Rawdon, they will hang him."

"He will hardly do that either, unless he finds his schemes have been defeated. No! no! shake off your gloom, and go to your duty. Send out your scouts at once, and scour all the woods down to Orangeburg. Let us both away on our separate duties at once. Let me have your escort. The night is upon us."

And the two parted, going several ways; Rutledge, with

Mazyck and his escort upward, and Sinclair with all but two troopers, left to watch Holly-Dale, burying himself in the lower woods, where, under direction of Ballou, the scout, some of the men carrying torches, the whole command was so scattered as to cover the width of the wood from the edge of the swamp to the main road. Thus displayed, the troopers pushed down in equal line, with regular pressure, and as rapidly as they might consistently with their purpose of close search along the route. The lower swamp itself could not be penetrated on horseback, or searched successfully by night, and Sinclair shook his head sadly as he thought that the poor boy might, even then, be held down, and half stifled, not a hundred yards distant, in some one of its deep recesses.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

HOW HENRY TRAVIS FARED IN HIS FIRST BATTLE.

As a matter of course, before the attempt to search the woods was begun, a thorough inquiry was made among the troopers, and a search of the grounds immediately about the house instituted, in order, if possible, to find some clues to the fate of the boy. But no information was obtained which could be relied on, or which was in any way valuable. He had been seen by several persons, but only for a moment; and when the excitement of the conflict was such that each had his own cause of anxiety, his own work on hand, and when one impression instantly dispersed all traces of the preceding. His boyish eagerness had been noted, his boyish shouts were remembered. But it was surprising how completely he had been lost sight of by everybody, in the moment when Sinclair himself lost sight of him;—the moment when the latter charged up the northwest avenue, in the final assault upon the only party of the loyalists who still showed am embodied front. We have seen the fortunate result of this charge, and need say no more on the subject. When Sinclair first heard from Bertha that Henry had not appeared, a full hour had elapsed after the strife was over—this time being consumed in collecting the prisoners, attending to the wounded, and making such dispositions as were called for by the safety of the party, and in the consultation with Rutledge.

Feeling some natural self-reproaches for his momentary forgetfulness of one so really dear to him as Henry Travis, and now greatly anxious for his fate, Sinclair hastened his proceedings for the search, and having made such arrangements as would tend to the better prosecution of his attempts, he soon disappeared with his command, meaning himself to lead the

hunt, at all events until the party reached Four-Mile creek; when it was his purpose, whether successful or not, to press down with the larger body of his men, by a rapid movement upon Orangeburg, fulfilling the objects indicated in his conference with Rutledge. The further search after the boy, if he was not recovered before reaching that point, was to be left to Ballou and 'Bram, with half a dozen of the best scouts from among the dragoons. Nothing more could then be thought of.

Leaving our major of dragoons to this labor, we return to the field, and resume our narrative of the struggle.

It is for us to supply the deficient knowledge, which now prompted the search of Sinclair; and to show by what processes our young friend, Harry Travis, disappeared from the scene of action. We have the evidence of his presence upon the field. He came down with the rest, in the rapid charge of Mazyck, which surprised the loyalists, at the moment when Lieutenant Fry, and three or four of his followers were breaking into the house. Those without, sitting their horses carelessly, or dismounted and strolling about the grounds, were taken wholly by surprise when the dragoons charged; and being raw recruits mostly, and totally lacking the coolness and steadiness of old soldiers, dispersion followed, except in the small group of ten or a dozen, who, wheeling around the house, dashed up the avenue, the only opening, which promised them an unobstructed course for flight. The rest, whether on horse or a-foot, darted at once for shelter into the lower woods, or scattered themselves about the grounds, to be run down, and knocked severally on the head by Mazyck's troopers, some of whom very naturally addressed themselves to these performances.

Henry Travis, pistols in hand, found himself thus engaged, along with the rest, almost without a thought. He had heard the shout of Sinclair, and his own had answered it with an exulting sense of joyousness; but the major, at that moment, was on one side of the house, he on the other; Sinclair was dragging forth the horse of Fry, preparing to charge the only compact force of the enemy which still kept the field. Henry did not see him — did not know of the party which had swept up the avenue. His eyes were sufficiently occupied with the fugitive

figures, on horse or afoot, that were to be seen scattering in search of cover; and he was led away, by a natural impulse, which effectually rendered him heedless of any objects, but the one actually before his eyes.

Now, it will be remembered, that Inglehardt had left Dick of Tophet and Brunson the Trailer, in cover behind the dairy, commissioned with the special duty of securing the person of Bertha Travis, and making off with her to the swamp, irrespective of any of the proceedings of himself and his troopers. This was one grand feature of his meditated performances that day, the next in importance to the one task which he assigned to himself, of capturing or destroying Sinclair. We have seen the fruits of his mistake, in supposing that Sinclair was the only guest at Holly-Dale.

Dick of Tophet and the Trailer were duly impressed with the importance of the duty confided to their hands, by the promise of ten guineas—an immense sum in those days—to be divided between them, in the event of the girl's captivity, and her safe delivery, in the swamp, into the hands of their employer. *He* had his reasons for not undertaking her seizure at the house in person. His emissaries were instructed that they were to confine themselves wholly to the one object, and not to take part in any other performances of the troopers. The rest of the duties of the day, Inglehardt reserved wholly to himself, and his lieutenant, Fry, and entertained no misgivings—as why should he?—of the perfect adequacy, for his objects, of all his arrangements.

Dick of Tophet and the Trailer, accordingly, having fastened their horses, along with that of their captain, in a close patch of the wood, some fifty or sixty yards south of the settlement, had taken their places of watch in the rear of the dairy. Here they were conveniently situated for covering the garden, the kitchen, and, by a sudden dash, compassing the open ground between these points and the dwelling. But their position did not suffice to take in any of the grounds *above*, either in the north or west. On foot, and sheltered by woods or fences, they could see nothing of the upper avenue. But they could hear, and were soon apprized by the blast of the bugle, which they supposed to be Inglehardt's, and by the

strokes of the axe upon the inner doors of the dwelling, that there was some resistance to be overcome, the character of which they could only conjecture. They concluded that Sinclair, taken in the toils, had barricaded himself in one of the chambers, and that Inglehardt was forcing his way in. Their next conclusion was, that, so soon as the strife should be begun in the house, the females would be forced to leave it, and to fly, either to the kitchen or the woods. They were to keep themselves ready for this event and moment. To do this, they stole into the garden, tearing off the palings sufficiently to obtain entrance, and passing up, under shelter of the fence all the while, to that corner of it which stood nearest to the dwelling. Here, they might have penetrated into the court, by simply opening the gate of the garden; but any premature exhibition of their persons might only have defeated their objects; and they finally crept forward from this point to one of the angles of the garden, which led obliquely to the lower or southern avenue. Here the woods approached very closely to the garden. The thicket of oakwoods, sprinkled with pines, was of some density; and it was from this point that Inglehardt's troopers had gradually pressed forward into the open area about the dwelling. The employment of Fry, within the house—the noise of his axe, naturally acting upon their anxieties, had led them forward, and they were grouped carelessly but curiously about the dwelling, on that side chiefly, from which Fry and his followers had forced their way into the windows. There was no enemy to be seen, and, in such cases, raw recruits are apt to think that none is to be feared. So completely, indeed, did the place seem to be in the hands of Inglehardt—so entirely at his mercy—that its situation appealed to the cupidity, even against caution, of such old soldiers as Dick of Tophet and the Trailer. The former as he looked out and listened—noting the eager but careless groups in the foreground, exclaimed to his companion:—

"Gimini! Gimini! Rafe! there's nice pickings to be had in that establishment; and we might ax sensibly, who's to git 'em?"

"I reckon; but I don't think that the cappin is a-guine to let any of us hev' a hack at it; he'll be for keeping it all to himself."

"I reckon he'll not be able to help it, ef the thing once be-

gins, and we kin only git a little Jamaica to set the boys fairly a-fire. I say, Rafe, one of us is enough to take this gal off in safety, and t'other kin work for both in picking up the little gould and silver things that's apt to be lying about, jest ready for the hands, when a family's a leetle in fright and confusion. The cappin needn't know but that we brought off the gal together. Eh? What do you say? S'pose you takes the gal affair upon your hands, while I see to the pickings about the place, and we'll share honest what we gits together?"

"Ah! Dick, don't I know what sort o' share is guine to come to me? Don't I know you too well? You ain't a-guine to let me see or smell a quarter of the things you picks up."

"Who the h—l says I ain't honest?" Look you, Rafe Brunson, it's not the part of an old friend to make sich insinivations! A man's *charakter* for fair dealing with his friends, when the business is pickings and putting away, is more precious than any gould and silver; and I'll hev' my fingers in the hair of any pusson, in mighty short order, that says I takes more than my rightful share in the incomings of our right honorable profession!"

"Well, don't be putting your fingers into my wool, Dick, till I gives you occasion. But jest say now, up and down, you'll give us *hafe* of what you picks up Dick?"

"Hafe! I didn't say that! But I'll give a *rightful* share to the man that's my partner in the business. *Hafe's* another thing. It don't stand to reason that he should hev' a full hafe; bekaise him that takes all the risk, hes a right to all, 'cept what he chooses to think the other one desarves. Now, you know that I'm always for the most resk, and I don't vally pistol-shot or sabre-cut, when it's all that stands a'tween me and a pretty pickings. But you does. You don't go into a skrimmage with a whole heart. You're best for trailing and scouting, and I'm best for fighting; and we shares accordin to a man's natur, and what his desarvings calls for. Don't I know that when that house is a gutting, I'll be called upon to draw knife on some of them troopers? Don't you see that I'll hev to fight, hand to hand, with the Lord knows who or how many—prehaps a dozen! And don't you see that I kain't stand to see one of them chuckleheads carrying off a fine gould watch, or a great silver dish, or a heavy silver cup, or any precious fine thing

that he don't know the vally of, when small chores would answer just as well for him; and ef he's obstropulous, and won't let me manage for him, don't you see, I'll hev' to slip a knife into his windbag? Now that's the work that you don't love to do, and that's the very work I'm best up to; and it's hard work, too; and its mighty dangerous work, Rafe; and it makes a man so sorry when he has to do it to one of our own people. No! it stands to reason that the man what takes sich hard work, and mighty resks on himself, has a rightful share to jist what he pleases; and has the right to give his partner, jist only what's proper to his small services. Now, you see, this job of carrying off the gal, I shares that equal with you. 'Tain't much to be done, you see. Thar's no fighting, only jest quick catching and close watching. Well, I got the job, and that's about the hardest part of it. Well, you takes the gal off, and we shares equal them ten guineas; and I look to the pickings of the house, and I shares with you *handsome*, 'cordin' to my notions. And that's what I thinks honest dealings with a partner. But I'll make you say it's honest. Look you, you take the gal, and you shill hev' six out of the ten guineas. Thar! that's what I calls handsome. After that, there's no saying till we sees' the pickings, what I shill give you from the guttings of the house."

The Trailer answered this excessive liberality of his associate with a ghastly grin.

"It's jist like all your dealings, Dick: jist sich a bargain as the fox drives when he goes a hunting with the cat. But we'll see. I reckon I kin manage the gal easy enough, and I confess you air best for a skrimmage, and for finding out where the good pickings air."

The superior will of the ruffian, as usual, coerced his companion into submission.

"Well, now, Rafe, that being fixed and onderstood between us, 'twill be jest right now to get ready to make a spring. I don't want any of them lankside troopers to be much ahead of me. It's well, prehaps, whar thar's any chaince of a skrimmage, to send one or two of 'em ahead jist to draw the bullets of the inimy; but I reckon thar's no bullets hyar to be drawn, except Sinclair's, and the cappin is more in the way of his, jist

now, than anybody else; and all the scuffle a'tween them will be over afore we need to put in. So jist you follow me out through this paling. We'll jist get on the outside, easy to the house, and easy to the woods. Whenever I goes into a gentleman's parlor, I likes to keep the door open behind me. Thar now, a dozen steps, and I gits to the house; hyar now, at my back, is the woods; and, yonder, about a hundred yards, is the horses. You see?"

"All right, I reckon! It's a good place I think for ossevation."

"Good; it's the only place! Here we're ready for jest anything what happens. But they're mighty slow. Hah! what's that? a shot! two shots! Willie Sinclair's giving the fellows his lead! But pistols can't do much in any man's hands with hafe a dozen fellows on him."

"There goes another—bang!"

"And another! and thar's a bugle blast."

"That's not for us! Hello! what's the trouble now? what's them horses we hears? It's a troop!"

"A rush, by jingoes! A troop of dragoons at full speed, down the avenue. Gimini! they're St. Julien's men. Hell and blisters! won't these fellows catch it! Whar's the cappin? whar's Fry? whar's anybody, to hold up these fellows and make 'em face about handsome! Grim! I must bring 'em about, square up to the music, or they'll be smashed to pieces in a twinkle."

And Dick of Tophet drew his sabre, and was rushing out to the area, where the loyalists were beginning confusedly to show their consciousness of the new danger, when the Trailer caught his arm, and dragged him back into cover.

"What air you about, Dick?"

"Don't you see?" pulling away from his companion. "These chaps will be smashed eternally to pieces, and nobody to show 'em what to do!"

"And kin you help 'em—kin anybody help 'em now? Don't you see the broadsword is writ on every one of their necks. They're cotch'd napping, on their haunches, and will never make a rise. Thar the fellows come with a whoop!"

"Thunder and smoke! I kain't look at it, and do nothing!" and Dick of Tophet, as he spoke, would have broken away

from the grasp of the Trailer, but that the other held on firmly, and drew him further back into the thicket, in spite of his struggles.

"You're a fool, after all, Joel Andrews! You kain't do no good. You kain't save them fellows! They're gone! Thar! don't you see! They're melted fairly under the rush. Half a dozen saddles emptied, and the rest scudding round the house with the dragoons after them! Hark! thar's another rush! Hafe of them dashing up the avenue!"

"And the dragoons after them! Who's that? Thunder! It's Willie Sinclair, himself, as I'm a born sinner! He's in the saddle! Whar kin the cappin be? Whar's Inglehardt? None thar but Sinclair! Thar! you hear him shouting! Now, whar's the fellow, in all that squad, to face about and taste his broadsword? Oh! ef I only had a good ducking gun to draw sight on him now, with fifteen pelters in the barrel!"

"Don't stop to talk, Dick. The time for us is gone. No pickings at that house to-day! Back! they'll see you! Look at them scattered fellows. They're making for the woods hyar, and will bring the dragoons upon us. Now's the time to snake away to the horses. Thar's no chaince, ef we stay. These fellows kain't hold up; they're too raw; they don't know now but that thar heads air all off. In! to the thicket, Dick, or you're a gone coon! The troopers air a-coming,"

And, seizing upon the arm of his reluctant companion, whose hope of pickings at Holly-Dale, was, for the present, effectually extinguished by this unexpected visitation, he drew him along with him into cover, both pushing on beside the rear of the garden fence, and toward the thicket behind the dairy where their horses had been fastened.

Dick of Tophet groaned as he went: "Sich a fine chaince cut up by these bloody rascals! Oh! gimini! thar's no honest chainces left for a poor fellow in the world!"

"Don't stop to grunt! You hear. They're a-coming."

The fugitives were dashing, pell-mell, into the woods below, the cover of the swamp affording them the best prospect of refuge. The policy of the Trailer was to keep aloof from their course: "Keep up above a bit—these runaway rascals will bring the dragoons upon us."

"Not too high! Thar's the thick where the nags are fastened."

"Yes, but let us stretch up a *leettle* and work round it. It's too open hyar to strike right straight."

"They're a coming this way! Hark!"

"It's but one horse, I'm a thinking."

"It's one of our people, perhaps."

"No! it's a blasted boy! He sees us! The kitten! He's a whooping at us! Ha! a pistol-shot! Pop! another! A tree! a tree, Rafe!"

And, verily, the young trooper, for whom Dick of Tophet and his companion now prepared themselves, was no other than our missing boy, Henry Travis. His quick eye had detected the two outlaws, at the very moment when they skulked out of the foreground, making into the upper woods; while the fugitives generally struck for the lower thickets, which led directly to the swamp. While the dragoons dashed after the latter, Henry, without ever pausing to ask if he was followed, or accompanied, started off, in a smart canter, in pursuit of the two. Shouting to them to halt and yield, he emptied his pistols as he rode—ineffectually—while Devil Dick and the Trailer, separating, dodged behind several trees, but within supporting distance of each other.

"The barking puppy. Surrinder to sich as *him!*" muttered Dick of Tophet. Then, as the boy came dashing on, he sprang out from his tree, caught the bridle of the steed in his grasp, and wheeled the animal right about, backing him among the bushes. Henry boldly hurled his pistol at his head; but this, though well-aimed, the assailant dodged with great dexterity; already had the boy lifted the other pistol, resolutely intending not again to miss, when a blow from the Trailer behind, knocked him from his horse, and covered one side of his face with blood. When the youth became fully conscious, after this stunning blow, it was because of the smart motion of the horse which bore him, closely grasped in the arms of his captor, and moving rapidly through an open pine thicket, which his dulled faculties—for he was still in a state of stupor from the blow—failed to recognise as a tract belonging to his father's plantation.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE SORE STRAIT—THE HOT TRAIL—CAPTIVITY.

The cool, sturdy, experienced habits of Dick of Tophet and his companion, the Trailer, enabled them to make off successfully, carrying with them not only their own, but the horses of their captain, and that of Henry Travis. These two horses were led by the Trailer, while Dick bore away their captive, as we have seen, upon his own steed. They moved off with sufficient deliberation, in a walk at first, so that no unnecessary clatter should reach the ears of any hostile party—took a circuitous course, which carried them almost within sight of the main road, upon which, however, they were careful not to show themselves; and, having reached a point sufficiently remote, they started off in a smart canter, wherever the thickets would allow of it, rounding gradually down, toward the swamp, and in the direction of the bay, where it had been arranged that the whole party should rendezvous. In this progress they were totally unpursued. The natural direction taken by fugitives and pursuers alike, was toward the swamp recesses. The sagacity of the old troopers assured them that such would be the probable course of both parties, and their senses confirmed the conjecture. But for this, and had Sinclair, the moment his victory was made sure, turned into the woods with his whole troop, there is little doubt that the outlaws would have been compelled to abandon their prisoner, in order to effect their own escape, and even then they would scarce have succeeded in the latter object. There is a farther probability, however, that, forced to release their captive, they would first have brained him. Neither of them was much inclined to burden himself with prisoners, and, but for the selfish speculations of the least merciful of the two, our young volunteer would have found his first field his last. Brunson, the Trailer, was for despatching

him, in the very moment when he knocked him off his horse but Dick of Tophet resisted.

"No! no! Rafe; the lad's worth his weight in gould to us, I reckon."

"I don't see how. Your gould speckilations, Dick, don't turn out so well in the send as you says at the beginning. Ef we're to carry that lark along with us, the chaince is that we'll hardly git off with whole bones ourselves."

"Oh! I reckon we shill. You see the chase takes down for the swamp. Nobody seed us slipping off up here, but this young cocksparrow, and it warn't lucky for him that he did. Hyar, now, gi's a hand, and sling him up to my crupper. I'll take him easy enough tell he kin raise his own head. It's a heavy clip you've gi'n him."

"I reckon the skull's cracked," was the reply, as they raised the boy across the saddle. "Ef so, thar's no great use in toting him. Better throw him off, and let's put him out of his pain."

"Grim! no! I tell you thar's gould to come out of that boy's hide. The cappin will pay for his carkiss, dead or alive; and, ef he gits over that crack of yourn, his dad's able to pay smartly. He's as rich as a Jew."

"He's not a-breathing, Dick."

"Yes! It's only a swound he's in. I reckon such a lick over your head or mine, would have put us in a swound too. Bear up. Thar! that will do. Now mount yourself and bring on the horses. We must push for the bay."

"But you don't reckon to find anybody thar! And whar's the cappin all this time?"

"I reckon he's fast lock'd up in the arms of keptivity. But we kin buy him out, with this boy and his dad. Push on now, and recollect you've got to pick him up. Ef nobody comes to the rendezvous by midnight, we must git across the river somehow, and that too without going down to the village. I reckon that'll be the place where Willie Sinclair will be pushing, as soon as he gits his troopers all in hand after this chase. It'll be no place for us. We must git across the river without going down to the village, even ef we has to swim the horses."

"And I wonder how you're to carry Cappin Travis and this chap across, on swimming horses?"

"Whar thar's a will thar's a way, Rafe! But we must sarch for a dugout. I reckon I kin find one in and about Four-Mile creek. At the worst, we kin leave the prisoners behind, ef we find that we're pressed too hard."

And, thus communing, they rode—the powerful arms of Dick of Tophet sustaining the still insensible boy, slung like a dead body across his saddle, and Brunson following as close as he could with the two led horses. All this while, the troopers of Sinclair were fruitlessly pressing down into the swamp fastnesses after the half dozen fugitives, who had sought refuge there. And this search was the loss of a great deal of precious time. Joel Andrews and his comrade, with their captive, had reached the bay where the boy's father had been fettered, long before the lights began to gleam in the distant woods, from the torches of Sinclair's troop, now all on the trail, beating the woods from the main road to the edge of the swamp, in search of the missing boy.

Before our fugitives reached this point, Henry Travis began to recover. His groans, followed by a struggle to raise himself upon the saddle, apprized Dick of Tophet of his returning life and senses.

"He'll do!" he muttered. "Well, my lad, what do you want?"

"Lift me up," said the boy.

"Well, I reckon it'll be easier to both of us if you do set upon your own haunches a little."

And he stopped his horse, and gave the boy the necessary assistance, which raised him upon the saddle, sitting with both legs upon the same side of the horse, after the fashion of female equestrians.

"Thar you are, my little kurnel; and, now, how do you feel?"

"Feel?"

"Ay! that's what I axes. How do you feel? Hev' you got any aches and pains in preticklar? A leetle sore about the head, I reckon, and a leetle stiffish in the j'ints. You ain't been a-riding jest as you've been used to ride, I reckon."

"My head! my head!" murmured the boy.

"I reckon it's a leetle oneasy. It's an onnateral headache

you've got, cotch'd from a graze agin the butteend of a pistol. You see, my leetle cocksparrow, if such young birds as you will go into a skrimmage, it's but nateral you should catch some sore throats and sore heads, and sore shins, and be sore for a long spell a'ter it. But, you'll be better by to-morrow. A leetle pine-gum plaister on that head of yourn will stop up the sore places."

The boy murmured:—

"Won't you let me down? I must go to mother."

"No! no! Your mammy don't want to see you tell you gits better; but I'll carry you to your daddy. He's a-waiting for you now."

The boy was silent—not so much because he was satisfied with this assurance, but really in consequence of returning stupor. But he still kept erect upon the saddle, the arm of his captor circling him with its great muscles, and the horse pressing forward now at a canter. Henry saw that he was going through a pine-forest, with no great undergrowth, but his senses were quite too much dulled for observation. When the party approached the bay, Dick of Tophet said to his companion:—

"You kin stop and see after the prisoner. I'll push down toward the creek. We must keep the two sep'rate jest now. When you hears my horn, bring your coon down to the creek as well as you kin. You kin loose his legs and make him walk it, at the p'int of the bagnet. He may need a stick or two, of your knife, to make him sensible which road he's to take."

Dick rode on half a mile farther, and was within a hundred yards of the creek, when he heard a whistle which he answered. Suddenly, a man emerged from the thicket.

"What's ripe?" demanded the trooper.

"Corn in mutton!" was the answer, in the deliberate tones of Inglehardt.

"Gimini! You—your own self, cappin? Why, how did you git off and git here so soon?"

A few words sufficed for answer.

"Who have you got here?"

"A prisoner! The young cub of the old wolf. Jest no other possum than Travis's son."

"Ha! ha! father and son—eh? Well, they may bring the daughter yet. Bring the boy down to the creek—put him at once into the dugout, and take him across the river. Rope him and leave him there. Bring back the boat as soon as possible. It will take us three trips to get the party over."

But Henry Travis, now on his legs, resisted the tender entreaties of Dick of Tophet.

"Let me go. I'm no prisoner. Isn't that Captain Inglehardt?"

He had distinguished the voice of the latter, though he had failed to discover more than the outline of his person. Inglehardt walked away taking no notice of the speech.

"No matter who it is, my lark, as for being a prisoner, who says you is? You're only a young gentleman on a visit to his friends, whom they're a taking care of. That's the how: so come along with me, and don't be giving us the trouble to pick you up roughly to lay you straight."

And he laid hands on the boy to haul him forward. But the gallant lad jerked himself free, wheeled about, and having no weapon but his fist, planted a blow in the breast of the other, which was quite creditable, for aim as well as force, to so young a bruiser.

"Ha! you're at that, air you," answered the ruffian, returning the blow as he spoke, and felling the poor boy as if under the weight of a sledge-hammer.

"Don't hurt him, if you can help it," said Inglehardt returning for a moment. "But don't let him escape you."

"That he won't; but the young cock's game. If ever he lives to git his spurs he'll rash somebody's sides yit."

Thus speaking, he lifted up the boy and carrying him without seeming effort to the creek, laid him down in the bottom of the dugout, which he at once pushed away from the shore. Seizing upon one paddle, while the negro boy Julius plied the other, he was not long in making his way to the main stream, and still less time getting across. Here, having taken out his captive, he corded his arms and feet securely, and left him, under cover, upon the opposite banks. He then put back with all speed for the creek, and arrived just at the moment when the Trailer had brought down the four horses to the water.

"Why didn't you bring the prisoner, and leave the horses to the last?" demanded Inglehardt.

"He's right, cappin. We've got the boy, and that's some thing even if we lose the daddy. As for the horses, we kin never do without them, wherever we go, and there's no telling whar to git others, ef we lose these. We must put them over at once."

Two horses swimming beside the canoe, were all that the boy Julius could manage. Two trips were required accordingly for the transfer of the beasts to the opposite side. This consumed no little time, and was not a little wearisome to our Dick of Tophet, strong man as he was. When he recrossed a third time to his superior, he found the loyalist captain not a little anxious for his coming.

"You were long that trip, Dick, very long."

"Yes, indeed, and ef I hev' much more of sich work to do to-night, I'll git longer and longer, untell I snap right off in the middle."

"Don't talk of breaking down yet, my good fellow. That will do when we are all quite safe on t'other side. The Trailer's slow. What can keep him."

"Well, I reckon he's pretty well wore out like myself, and I spose old Travis won't do nothing for himself, and the Trailer 'll hev' to prick him along with the small eend of a knife, as I tell'd him. We hain't got much time to lose, that's mighty sartin."

Inglehardt strode up and down with a degree of impatience, clearly expressed; which was a very unusual exhibition with him. He had need to be anxious. By this time the signs and sounds of pursuit were to be heard from above. A mile ahead, the gleam of torches was to be seen, fitfully crossing through the woods. The hunt was up. The hunters were approaching. They could even hear the distant tread of the horse, and now and then a shout from the distant troopers announced some discovery.

Yet, the Trailer had not brought down *his* prisoner from the *bay*. Inglehardt was impatient.

"They will be upon us before we can get him off. By heavens! I hear dogs. Do you not? If there are dogs, we are lost."

Devil Dick stooped to listen.

"I don't hear the dogs. I reckon they've got none. Ef they hed they'd ha' been down upon us long before. They never would have kept the straight track down through the woods when we never come that way. No! I don't reckon they've got dogs. But they're a coming on jist as fast as ef they had. 'Twouldn't do to push up and see after the Trailer now, for I see a light that kain't be fur from the bay, and thar's no saying how many are a stalking softly in the darkness jest between where them lights are a-scattered."

"No! we must take no such risk. D—n the fellow, what can he be about?"

"Aix him! He's a born fool for anything but scouting. That he kin do prime. I wonder whar's his sense to waste time upon a prisoner. He had only to slit his throat and make tracks, ef so be the fellow was troublesome. And what's a prisoner? It's one thing to bring him off, and so much the better; but it's a more serious thing to bring one's self off, and save one's bacon. Ef he don't come soon—"

"Hark! Hush! There is a dog, Dick."

"It sounds a leetle like! Look you, cappin, we'd best take the boat and push her out to the river, we kin lie off and listen, and ef the Trailer comes down before the troopers, we kin take him aboard jist as easy as if we staid here, and resk'd our own necks. He'll find the way down to the mouth of the creek, for he knows, if he's got as much sense as a groundmole, that we're a hanging off and on."

"There goes a horse down to the right."

"Yis, and another right toward us. Them torches are this side of the bay. Let's put out, captain. It's an easy rush down to where we stands."

"Yet I am unwilling to leave the fellow."

"Never you mind him. Thar's no fear of the Trailer, ef so be he'll only cast off the prisoner, or lay him out, with a sharp tooth jest where he stands: as for us—look you, cappin, thar's no time for shilly-shally. They're a coming, by all the pipers, and with a rush. Look at all of them torches a coming together and jest hear them horses."

He seized Inglehardt by the wrist, and pulled him, still half

reluctant, down to the boat. They got in, and pushed her out into the deepest part of the creek, which, by the way, just at this point, was barely deep enough to float her, light and little as she was. The paddles were dipped carefully, and the dugout slipped forward without a murmur, her head down to the river. When she reached the mouth of the creek, Inglehardt took hold of the overhanging branches of a tree, and held fast. The paddles were taken in—they waited and listened.

Still they could see the torches and occasionally hear the tread of horses. It was now quite evident that the former were flaring about not far from the spot where they had stood.

"We didn't put out a moment too soon, cappin."

"No! They have completely surrounded the Trailer."

"Ah! but he's a raal mole for finding a way out, and lying close to the airth. I reckon they ain't found him. We'd ha' hearn something of it if they hed."

"Hist! Thar's a troop in motion."

"It's guine down. But you see, thar's the lights still all along the edges of the swamp. I reckon Sinclair divided, and one hafe of his troop's pushing for the village, looking a'ter us, and t'other's beating the bushes."

"The torches are going upward. They're all together, as if in consultation."

"Ay, I reckon they've gin it up as a bad job. They ain't found nothing to pay them for the ile of their joints that's worked out to-night."

"What! do you think the Trailer has escaped."

"Sure as a gun! I reckon he's given Cappin Travis a touch of cold steel and laid him out under the bushes, and he's taken a stretch alongside of him for company sake."

"You don't suppose he's murdered Travis?"

"Tain't murder in wartime, captain, and he's done it in self-defence. Travis can't give tongue, and the Trailer won't, and they lie snug together between some old logs. That's the how. Ef they had found the Trailer, or the cappin, dead or alive, wouldn't they hev' given tongue in a mighty hellabaloo? But they hain't, and that makes me sure they hain't found either of 'em. I reckon, cappin, we might put the nose of the dug-out up the creek again. By easy paddling, we can snake up, and

make no stir, to whar we was a standing before. Then, if we hears nothing, and them torches are a gitting fainter and fainter, I'll put out for the bay, and see if one old scout can scent the track of another. Rafe knows my whistle, jist as he knows one bird from another.

"Very good. Put about."

And the dug-out was sent up the creek again, and found her way to the former position without disturbing any unfriendly echoes.

During all this while, Sinclair and his troopers, as we have seen, had been busy brushing the forest. They had picked up three prisoners, who readily submitted and joined the troop of the conqueror. But the particular fugitives sought for had not been found; and, leaving a body of his followers, chiefly under the guidance of Jim Ballou, to scout while there was any hope of discovery, the major of dragoons pushed forward with all speed to Orangeburg.

After waiting some time on the movements of the scouting party of Ballou, whose torches were still to be seen occasionally, like so many flitting corpse candles through the distant woods, Dick of Tophet said:—

I reckon, cappin, it'll be quite safe to take a peep at the bay now and see what's 'come of the Trailer."

"Ay, we'll go together, Dick."

"Better don't you, cappin. Who knows what's a squatting in them woods a waiting to see upon whose shoulders it may jump. It's easier for one man to git cla'r of a spring than two; and though two's better for fighting than one, yet in a scouting affair like this, one's safest."

"Safe or not, Dick, I'll take a look at the woods along with you."

"Well, come along: but you've got no we'pon! Hyar's a pistol, one of mine. I've got the pair of that young catamount of Travis in my buzzom, but they ain't loaded."

"This will do. Push ahead."

"Close and saftly now, cappin," was the prompt answer, and they both entered the woods.

They moved cautiously, and reached the precincts of the bay without interruption. Then Devil Dick whistled—"Jist you

see," as he said, "an insinivating whistle, as if to say, thar's a little friendly bird a hopping about, and he tells you the hawks are all gone."

A very few moments only had elapsed when the signal was answered, and in five minutes more the party in search encountered the Trailer coming toward them.

"Lord, Rafe, how we hev' sweated for you."

"I reckon I've done a pretty bit of sweating for myself, old fellow, jist from thinking of the hug of the black bear that was a looking a'ter me. More than once I thought I had his very paws upon me. But a miss is good as a mile, and the sweat's gone off with the danger. I was jist awaiting to be sure that all was safe afore I ventured out to look a'ter you. I didn't dare to risk the signal, 'till I had snaked all round and a'tween the bay and the creek."

"You have had a narrow chaince, Brunson."

"Well—it's true—I hev'—but you see, cappin, ef a man has the experience and the sense, and ain't scary, but kin jist lie cool and wait his time, thar's hardly any chaince so narrow that a small sizeable man kain't squeeze through. I would hev' got to you long before the troopers worked down on the trail hyar, if it 'twarn't for that derned troublesome prisoner that you give me to bring along."

"What have you done with him?" demanded Inglehardt somewhat anxiously.

"Stowed him close away—"

"Hed to knife him, Rafe—eh?"

"You have not killed him, Brunson?"

"No, cappin—but I come mighty nigh to doing it. A leetle more and and I had done it. As 'twas, I made out by giving him a tickle of cold steel, now and then, in the throat and sides."

"Is he much hurt?"

"No, I reckon not—only a little sorish where I tickled him, and from a hard jam which I had to give him under long timber, with my weight screwed into his carcass."

The Trailer was allowed to detail his adventures *seriatim*. We shall condense his narrative to our limits.

Very much delayed as he had been in bringing down the

horses and providing for their transfer to the opposite side of the river, the Trailer, when he returned to his prison, found the distance between his position at the bay, and that of the scouting party of Sinclair very much lessened. This required the utmost decision, and the most prompt movement, in order to effect his object. Besides, greatly fatigued as he had been by his previous exertions, it demanded an extraordinary effort of will and energy to bring himself to any farther tasks. But the old scout and soldier is usually capable of these extraordinary efforts, and the Trailer set about his labors with sufficient resolves for his purpose. He untied the legs of Travis, and bade him walk. But Travis showed himself reluctant to do anything which could contribute to the prolongation of his captivity. He beheld the torches of the hunters, and he heard the tramplings of their horses. He divined their object, and readily conjectured the whole history of Inglehardt's defeat at Holly-Dale, very much as we have been able to report. He was slow, therefore, to obey the requisitions of the Trailer, and with such near promise of succor. But he felt too entirely at the mercy of the fellow still, and knew too well how reckless of human life were all such persons at such moments, and he forebore open opposition, and aimed only to delay a progress which he could not avowedly withstand. At first he concluded to try if his custodian was corruptible. He offered him a liberal reward in money, to be paid him as soon as he could get back to Holly-Dale. Twenty guineas was a sum to dazzle the imagination of the scout under ordinary conditions, and the sum promised was increased to thirty. But the Trailer, not being a whit more virtuous than his neighbors, yet acknowledged certain laws and obligations. He was very much afraid, if the truth were known, of Dick of Tophet, his companion, to whom he ascribed fearful powers, and whose close neighborhood he was inclined to suspect. He was also sensible that he should establish a large claim upon Inglehardt by his fidelity in this very work in hand. Besides, he was a believer in the British crown, and in the potent sufficiency of the army of George the Third, to effect the permanent conquest of the country. Whatever were the considerations moving him to a virtuous resistance to the bribe offered—and we confess our inability to say or to conjecture

precisely what they were—it is enough to know that he rejected the tempting rewards offered by his captive—twenty, thirty, forty, and finally, fifty guineas—larger amounts than he had ever been possessed of, were thus rejected with the constancy of patriot virtue. This, at least, was his own story to Inglehardt. We are at liberty to believe it or not, as we please. He may have lied in this particular, and his policy might be simply to establish, in Inglehardt's mind, a true notion of the value of his services, by a reference to the sum which the opposite party was willing to pay for his escape.

Finding his bribes unavailing, and the troopers of Sinclair rapidly approaching, Travis changed his tactics and doggedly refused to walk.

"With that," said the Trailer, "I out with my knife and put it to his throat. 'Now,' says I, 'go, or I'll cut away! Says he—'You may cut me to pieces but I'll not walk a step! That riled me. At first I thought to pick him up, and take him off bodily upon my shoulders. But, Lord, I was jest then hardly able to carry myself, and felt a most like lying down and letting the troopers do what they would with me. But I was riled, and I tickled him about the chin and throat, and he seed I was getting the hair up, and he took a few steps for'a'd. But then he stopped short agin, and so I put the knife, I reckon half an inch deep into his haunches. That sent him for'a'd a leetle further, but jest then, hearing a shout, and seeing as how the torches was a coming on pretty fast, he stopped again, and swore he'd not go a peg further; and he threatened me with all sorts of hangings, and burnings, and whippings, and what not, of I didn't wheel about and march with him into the inimy's camp; and he then offered me his fifty guineas again, of I'd do as he wanted me. Jest then, I looked about me, and I seed the torches coming down mighty fast, and I heard the horses' feet heavy on the airth, and I seed that of he kept me shilly-shally, going a bit and stopping another, that he'd git off, and git me into the halter besides, and so I seed that I had one way only—and jest then he got pretieklarly bold and sassy, and I got more and more riled. I sweated like a bull in fly-time. So I jest looked at him a moment, and says I 'You won't go'—and says he 'No, I won't move a peg'—and jest as he said it, I

jumped on him full, and all spread out; and I brought him down to the airth, jest alongside of this great pine and by the old Harricane track, and, snake or no snake, I rolled him up, close agin the sides of the tree, with his face out, and I stretched myself down alongside of him, face in, and I fixed my knife at his throat, and I clapped my handkcher upon his mouth, and I said to him, softly through my shet teeth, 'Now, look you, ef you don't lie close, and keep still, by the eternal fires, I'll slash your oozen [weasand] jest as quick as I would that of a fat shote in December. And so I had him, the tree fastening him along the back from head to heel, my knees agin him in front, my body agin his body, my face to his face, my handkcher on his mouth, and my knife agin his throat."

"Grim! That was a sarcumvention! eh! cappin!" exclaimed Dick of Tophet in admiration. Inglehardt said nothing, and the Trailer proceeded.

"So I hed him pretty sure, and he felt it. And he lay quiet enough, though the torches flared out a'most alongside—and I jest let him feel the tickle of the knife p'int now and then, to keep him sensible; but one time, one fellow jumped his horse clean over the logs and his hind feet lighted down, I reckon, not three feet above my head. Then I felt him twist about and try to shake his mouth free from my handkcher, but I put my knees into him, and I scraped his throat a leetle with the knife, and he sung small like a child that smells the hickories over the chimney-place. And thar he is—jest as quiet as ever—only mighty sore about the keel and upper timbers, I reckon, and with jest sech a taste of my knife, as will sarve his palate for the next twenty years.

In a moment, Dick of Tophet was engaged in the agreeable task of pulling out the captive from that durance vile, in which he had been so judiciously tickled into silence. He was extricated, quietly submitted, helped himself to rise, but said nothing. His condition could not well be discerned, as the party had no light.

"Can you walk, Captain Travis?" demanded Inglehardt.

"Yes!"

"Lead him along—to the boat."

Sore, indeed, suffering pain of body and of mind, but stern

of soul, and in some degree triumphant of soul as he felt sure of the escape of his family, of Rutledge and Sinclair — Travis was resigned to his fate. He, at least, would yield no triumph to his captor. He little dreamed of the pangs yet in reserve for him; and moved forward, with a stern calmness of demeanor to the creek between Devil Dick and the Trailer, though every step was taken in pain, and his whole body seemed in a very flame of fever.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

DOUBTS, HOPES, FEARS—A TANGLED YARN.

It was with a feeling of intense disappointment that Willie Sinclair found his search after Henry Travis fruitless. His duties imperatively required that he himself should forego it, after a certain period, and proceed to Orangeburg in prosecution of his military tasks. He did so, leaving Ballou, the scout, in charge of a small party commissioned to continue the pursuit so long as there remained any precinct in the vicinity unexamined.

He could not have left the affair in better hands. But Ballou found himself at fault. His hunt that night resulted in no discovery; and with the morning, he descended with his party into those recesses of the swamp which it was idle to attempt by night. His scouting in this region was nice and narrow. It was fruitless also, beyond the picking up of a couple more of the fugitives, one of whom was wounded by a pistol-bullet. The missing canoe led him to conjecture rightly the course which Inglehardt had taken. The absence of the slave Julius explained to the family the means by which the loyalist captain had been extricated from his bonds, and conclusively showed by whose agency the latter had been enabled to pick up so many of the secrets of the household. The only hope of the mother and sister, in respect to the safety of Henry Travis, lay in the hoped-for discoveries which Sinclair might make at Orangeburg. When this hope was expressed in the hearing of Ballou he was silent. Afterward, he said to 'Bram, the only comrade of the party to whom he condescended to utter his opinions freely:—

"No chance of that, 'Bram—no chance. Inglehardt knows better—knows better. He's picked up the boy, somehow. How, there's no telling jest yet; for you see, though we find

Inglehardt's track and the nigger's close to where the dugout lay at the landing, we don't find no other. The boys ain't there —ain't there. But you see, we hain't found Hell-fire Dick and we hain't found the Trailer, and it's clear they've got off —got off. Now, can you guess how, 'Bram? How?"

"Nebber kin guess, Ballou."

"Well, did you see them tracks about the garden?"

"I bin see—for true."

"Very well. I've got the measure of Hell-fire Dick and the Trailer, and them's their tracks. Now, you see, they've worked off a-foot to yonder thick, and there you see where they had their horses fastened—there, now, they've got a chance and carried off the boy—that's the how—the how. None but horse tracks after that, and such a crowd of 'em, there's no telling which is which. If I had been a-foot, and me only, and in a fair daylight, I might have taken the track of all of them—all of them. But this hunting by fire-light—it only sarves to blind one's own eyes, and to show the inimy how to skulk the better —skulk the better. Inglehardt and Dick and the Trailer, and the boy, and maybe Captain Travis himself, are all off somewhere together. The dugout could carry off three of them I reckon, and they may have picked up another boat along the river to carry off the whole. But what they've done with the horses there's no telling yet, and only one way to find out, and I'm for a search down along the river as far as Four-mile Branch to see *where they've put in.* For put in they must have done somewhere. They never made down the road—they never made up. They swum the river, or found a ford, and we must find out the how and the where. When we've done that, we can make a pretty sure guess as to what's become of them. My notion is they've crossed the horses, and dropped down the river themselves, leaving one of the party to fetch a compass through the woods and round the village with the horses."

"I 'speck you right, Ballou."

"I reckon I am. And now, 'Bram, I don't mean to take any of you fellows along with me on this search. You, and these dragoons, will stay here, and keep guard over the family, tell you get your orders from the major. And jest you say to Madam Travis and the young lady that I'm hard after sign

[trail-track] and that I'm mighty hopeful. Tell 'em there's no danger of any harm coming to the lad, *excepting* the captivity —*excepting* the captivity. You kin tell her this jest as well as me, and, *prehaps*, a little better; for I do hate to lie when I'm reporting about a scout, and if I see her a-weeping, and sobbing, and wringing her hands, I know I shall have to lie as bad as any regular trooper—lie as bad as a trooper—as a trooper! —and, Lord knows, lying comes as natural to a trooper as mother's milk to an infant, or whiskey to a militiaman, or roast pork to a famishing Christian nigger in cool weather. Now, you hear, I don't forbid you to lie a little if you see the case requires it—if the grief's very hard to bear—and you hear the women a-screaming too bad. You may tell what bloody lie you please to make 'em quiet, and strengthen their hearts, and make 'em feel better, and fill 'em with hope—fill 'em with hope. If 'twant about scouting, I could lie to 'em too, as well as anybody; but a scout that don't see sign must n't *say* sign. Such a scout's no better than a mangy dog that barks up the wrong tree—a mangy dog."

"Knock 'em on he head."

"Exactly! He ain't fit to live. Now, 'Bram, you understand what you're to do and to say. You kin lie a bit, I tell you, if you see that it will do the ladies good, and ease their afflictions, and you kin say that I'm on the track, and that I've found sign, and that you reckon I'll have the boy back again in a few days—a few days—have him back. And I hope I will, 'Bram, though I don't see the sign. and you're to stick to the house, and keep a sharp eye about you, and wait the major's orders and just you tell him that I'll keep out until I can make a sensible report."

"I yerry!"

"Very well! all right, so far. And now, 'Bram, do you see that?"

Here he pulled a corpulent quart bottle from his coat pocket.

"Ha! wha' dat, Jim Ballou? 'tis bottle."

"Well, you're a wise nigger, after seeing it, to guess so quick. But, do you know what's in the bottle?"

"I guess he whiskey. Ha?"

"Not a bit of it. It's nothing worse, 'Bram, than good old Jamaica. Smell of it, if you wish to be sartain."

"I kin tell am more better by de tas'e."

"Well, if you can't tell Jamaica by the smell, the liquor's not the sort to do you any good by the taste."

"Psho, Jim Ballou, dat's berry foolish sawt o' talk! Whay you git dat Jimmaker?"

"Out of the pocket of the red-headed fellow that we found half dead in the swamp this morning. I reckon he was bit with the liquor before he got the bite of the bullet. You see that there's a pretty considerable swig gone out of it; and the cork being a good one, I reckon it never went out of its own accord, and only by word of command."

"Look yer, Jim Ballou, you guine to pull at that Jimmaker?"

"Bram, I'd jest freely give my leetle finger now, cut off clean, to swallow one good mouthful of this charming creature—I would—my leetle finger—for only one good mouthful. I hankers for it, 'Bram. But I durstn't drink. I've swore a most etarnal oath, and it's as much as my soul's worth to taste of the beautiful varmint. But you shall drink on my account, and I'll charge to you. There! take a swig. Is it good, 'Bram?"

The negro's potation was deep; the stream poured down without a gurgle. The throat offered no resistance, and the prudent hands of Ballou finally tore away the bottle from the fellow's mouth. A smack of the lips, a long drawn sigh, and suddenly humid eyes, attested 'Bram's satisfaction.

"Is it so sweet, nigger?"

"Like de milk ob Heabben, Jim Ballou."

"You love it too much, 'Bram."

"You too, Ballou!"

"Yes, but I can't trust myself to taste. If I only taste, I'm gone. Can I trust you, 'Bram?"

"Wha' for no truss me? leff de bottle wid me, Ballou."

"If you give me your word of honor, 'Bram, that you'll only swallow one-half to-day, and t'other half to-morrow."

"I swuy!—"

"No! don't *you* swear! But just give me your word of honor as I tell you. There's enough for you, two days, if you drink like a gentleman."

"Psho! for able-bodied pusson like me, Jim Ballou, de liquor guine sarve only for one day."

"Yes, but you're to drink like a gentleman, not like an able-bodied person—a gentleman, 'Bram—a gentleman."

"For two day, den, I must 'habe [behave] like gemplemans?"

"Yes."

"But s'posing de young lady, Miss Bert'a, say to me, yes 'Bram, somet'ing to drink?"

"Then you're to keep the Jamaica for another day."

"Ha! Jim Ballou, you mighty hard 'pon dis nigger."

"You won't get it until you promise. Remember, you rascal, how *I* love it."

"I promise, Ballou—ef I doesn't, you only gwine to drink 'em you se'f and lose your 'spectability."

"Take it—and put it out of my sight, 'Bram. It's mighty hard work to keep my mouth from it. It's a sore trial of the flesh—sore—a sore trial of the flesh. Hide it from my sight. I'm mighty weak and thirsty."

"I'll tink 'bout you when I drinks, Ballou. Hope 'twill do you good, same as ef you bin drunk you se'f."

"Thank you! And now, 'Bram, keep your eyes bright, or the Philistines will be upon you. Remember all I've told you. Good-by, old fellow; I'm going to put out this very minute. Good-by! Don't forget, if you see too much grief going on, to put in a lie now and then about the *sign*."

"I 'member all wha' you say."

And the two shook hands and parted—the scout burying himself at once in the recesses of the swamp, and 'Bram taking his way toward the house, resolved upon any amount of lying, if he thought that the afflictions of the ladies should need that wholesome kind of sedative.

Meanwhile, Sinclair had startled all the echoes in Orangeburg. It was night still, and very dark, when his cavalry thundered up the streets. What could it mean? Who could it be? While the question was undecided, whig and tory kept equally close.

Sinclair darted at once upon the jail. It was a sort of citadel. The post of jailer was held by an invalided Scotch sergeant, who very reluctantly threw open his doors to the rebel troopers. The commissariat was soon emptied of arms and ammunition. A score of rifles, as many of muskets, bayonets,

a bale or two of blankets, and a variety of odds and ends in the way of arms, implements, and clothing—not too great a burden, however, for the troopers to divide and carry off upon their saddles, rewarded the raid. Petty as was the spoil, it was of very considerable importance to the Carolinians, half of whom were bare at hip and elbow—many only in part armed, and not a few without any weapon. The war of liberty rarely implies adequate provision for its champions.

It was several hours after daylight before our major of dragoons had sufficiently done his work in the village. Sixteen wild Irish were extricated from the dungeon, charged with the Irish virtue of mutiny and insubordination. Without asking questions, they hailed their deliverer with a shout. He had but one question to ask of them:—

"Who are you for—King George or freedom?"

"Is it fradom, do you say?" was the reply with one voice. "Och! thin, the divil fly away with King George, and all the other kings upon airth! Hoorah for the fradom, and Ameriky for iver!"

It was no use to expostulate with such ready converts to the true faith, or to put them under any special ordeal for the trial of their virtues. They were at once marched out into the open air, and enrolled in the ranks. Then followed the search for Inglehardt and his retainers and captives. But, after ransacking all suspected places, to the no small terror of the lurking loyalists, Sinclair was compelled to abandon the search in that quarter. He was in despair. No trace of Inglehardt—no sign of Henry Travis."

Noon found him back at Holly-Dale. Bertha was the first to hail his approach from the upper windows, and to rush out to meet him.

"Oh! Willie, what of Henry?"

But she read his answer in his looks, and wrung her hands, while the tears rolled down her cheeks.

"Nothing! nothing! Has Ballou made no discoveries?"

"He is gone in search. 'Bram says that he is on the track—that there are signs—and that he is in hope of finding him. He went alone. The soldiers are here."

"And 'Bram?"

"He is here also. Ballou preferred to go alone."

"He was right. Do not fear, Bertha. Ballou will find him.'

"But if he is hurt, Willie?"

"No fear of that. He is evidently carried off. Inglehardt has secured him while making his own escape."

"Have you had no signs of him?"

"None! He has probably got across, or gone down the river; but he can not escape us long, dear Bertha; and, meanwhile, there is no reason to suppose that he will harm the boy His game, I see. It is his policy to save him, but to keep him, and your father too, as pledges for you."

Here the mother joined them.

"My child, Sinclair—my child!"

Her eyes were dry, but wild, red, fearful to behold. Sinclair renewed his assurances, his encouragements, the expression of his hopes, the grounds for their security. These hardly reached or satisfied the senses of the mother. She could only repeat—

"My child! my child! my poor, poor boy! He was never away from me one night in his life. And, now—in what condition is he? in whose hands—how suffering? Oh! Willie Sinclair, will you not bring me back my boy?"

"I would die to do so, my dear Mrs. Travis! I will do all that can be done!"

How feeble are all words, all promises, all expressed hopes, in such a case, addressed to the ears of a mother!

It was long before she could vary this one note, or speak or think of other things. But, suddenly, she grasped Sinclair by the wrist:—

"It was this danger that he feared! He would have provided for this very chance! Hear me, Willie. You have my husband's letter. I am aware of what it contains. He bade me follow all its instructions in the event of his failure to return yesterday. You remember what they are?"

Sinclair nodded his head affirmatively.

"You are to have all the negroes transferred immediately to the Santee plantation. Bertha and myself are to follow them as soon as possible, and she is to become your wife—if you are prepared for it—without a moment's delay."

The cheeks of Bertha grew to crimson.

"His letter to me," answered Sinclair, "is to this very effect. I have planned the mode, and have the means, for conveying the negroes and your most valuable moveables to a place of security. Kit Rowe undertakes to convey your furniture to his plantation. Your husband has sent me his signature to a bill of sale, conveying it absolutely to Rowe. It may thus be saved. In your absence, the tories will probably destroy your house. Your cattle I shall have transferred to Greene's army. Your horses, except such as you need for your own purposes, I will take on account of the state for our troopers, several of whom have none. You will need but four for your journey to the Santee; and the sooner you set out the better, since escape, in two days more, will be next to impossible; Rawdon's army being in progress from the Congaree, Colonel Stewart from Charleston, and Cruger with a swarm of loyalists from above, and pressing down upon the route to Orangeburg between the two Edistos. They will pass your door. Your policy will be to force your way between Rawdon and Stewart, before they can effect a junction."

"But how can I leave Holly-Dale, Willie, and no tidings of my child?"

"You need not remain on this account. I shall see that tidings reach you, wherever you are, as soon as we obtain them. In remaining here, you know not what you risk. All this region will be under the control of the enemy, until we can come to blows with him, and, should we fail, you will be more at the mercy of the foe than ever."

It was a hard task with the mother to leave Holly-Dale while her son's fate was doubtful.

"Oh! Willie, should he return, the poor boy, and find nobody to recieve him!"

Of course, this notion of his voluntary return was combated as a great improbability, by Sinclair.

"He will not be suffered the chance to escape, my dear Mrs. Travis, by those who have him in captivity. I have no doubt that the same person who has carried off the father, has the son in custody also. I make no doubt they are both together. Neither will reappear, until brought back by Inglehardt, or until rescued by his foes. We shall spare nothing for the latter

object; and you need not wait here for the former. Whenever it is Inglehardt's cue to restore your son and husband, he will find no difficulty in doing so, go where you will. And go you must! Pardon me this earnestness, but you must suffer me to be master now. Submit—confide in me, dear Mrs. Travis—as the mother in her son."

"And you will be my son? Yes, Willie, I submit—I confide! God be merciful to me, Willie!—under him, I have now no hope but in you!"

She threw her arms about his neck and sobbed upon his shoulder.

"And how, and when shall the marriage take place, Willie?"

Bertha's cheeks flushed once more to crimson at the question, and she was turning away when the answer of Sinclair arrested her.

"There can be no marriage *now*, my dear Mrs. Travis. That is just now impossible."

Red and pale alternately did the cheeks of Bertha become in a single moment—pride and shame both active at a word Mrs. Travis withdrew her hands from the affectionate rest which they had taken on Sinclair's shoulder.

"How, sir, no marriage?"

"None just now, my dear mother;—and you, Bertha"—here he caught her hand—"do not you misunderstand me! No gift could be more precious to me than this hand, now and for ever! But I dare not, for your sakes, clasp it in marriage *now!* Were I to do so, we should lose all hold on Inglehardt—forfeit every hope of safety for Mr. Travis, if not for Henry. Such an act would precipitate the fate of one or both. It would cut Inglehardt off from that object, for which he keeps both of them in captivity. Were we married, he would at once sacrifice your husband to the fury of Balfour. He would expose those secrets which now give him a hold upon your father, and would denounce him, as the possibility no longer remained of securing the daughter through the terrors which he would seek to inspire in regard to the father's fate. While there is still a prospect of obtaining your hand, your father is safe. Cut off that prospect, and we have no security."

"But it was even this very state of things, his arrest and captivity, which my husband anticipated."

"True, my dear madam, and his commands, contemplating this prospect, afford a generous example of self-sacrifice, and are highly honorable; but he never once contemplated the capture and detention of his son. He never dreaded that the son's fate, no less than his own, rested upon the disposition of his daughter's hand. Heaven knows—nay, Bertha knows—that no blessing of Heaven could be more grateful to my soul than the instant possession of this dear girl's hand; but when I see the peril which it involves, to father and son alike, I dare not touch it—I dare not espouse her! We must wait! We are at the mercy of this base, cold-blooded villain, and you both know him only too well, to need that I should say, that our marriage would be fatal to the safety of Mr. Travis, and possibly to that of our dear boy, Henry."

"God be merciful!" groaned the mother, as the true situation in which she stood became apparent to her understanding. "God be merciful to me a mother! Oh! Willie Sinclair, I have ceased to think. I can only feel and fear. Do with me as you please. Give your orders. I obey. I submit without question—only tell me that you will save my husband—that you will give me back my boy."

"If human will and effort may do this, mother, at any hazard, it shall be done. Bertha, you do not doubt me? You are not angry?"

"Doubt you, Willie—angry with you! No! no! I trust you as my own soul. I love you as my life. Believe me! believe me, Willie. Though we never marry, Willie Sinclair, I am still yours, yours only!"

And the ingenuous girl flung her arms about her lover's neck, and kissed him as if he had been a brother. There was no longer a doubt—a cloud—a shadow—between their loves!

CHAPTER XXXIX.

FLIGHT FROM HOLLY-DALE.

THE plans of the family having been satisfactorily discussed that afternoon between the two ladies and Sinclair, the latter gathered the negroes of the plantation together early that night, and made them a little speech. 'Bram was formally introduced to them as their friend and guide. They were to travel under his direction. They were told, as were the Israelites of old, that the Santee country was the land of milk and honey—or rather of molasses, corn in abundance, any number of pigs, and 'coon and 'possum beyond any computation. A negro so relishes a change that he will even forget the charms of a first, for a second or even a third and fourth wife, and is always prepared for new lodgings. You can scarcely remove him too frequently for his own satisfaction. He is a creature of great levity, steadfast in nothing, except appetite, and feels more fully than any other people that moral of the vulgar—"*Omne ignotum pro magnifico!*" The unknown is to him always a Canaan of unqualified delights.

The fraternity seemed very well pleased with the prospect as painted to them by Sinclair, but lest anything should be wanting in his delineations, 'Bram himself took up the parole, where his master finished, and discoursed to them after his own fashion of eloquence.

"Yerry to me, brudderen, and you, my belubbed sisteren, be so good as to yerry to wha' I hab for say. Buckrah know someting, but he dun no ebbryting. Maussa, de major, is a bery sensible gemplemans, but he ain't always know de reasonable occasions and argymentations for mek de ting clear and comprehensible to de infections and onderstandings of a regenerate nigger. Now, you see, 'Bram hab all he maussa sense, da's

white man sense, and he hab all nigger sense besides, and da's he own. De ting wha' he tell you is no mo' dan de massiful trute: but he's no tell you half ob de good ting and de pleasure of dat same country 'pon de Santee. 'Bram knows 'em better dan de major know he book. When you git to dat country you nebber kin dead. For who guine dead so long as fat pig day run ebbry way onder he eye? You see fat pig dat run 'bout yer 'pon de Edisto, squeaking as he run, 'Come roas' me—come roas' me?' I ax you, brudderen and sisteren, how long sense you bin see sich purty critter as dat a running yer 'pon de Edisto?"

Here a grunt and murmur from the crowd.

"Well, you know wha's *yer*, and you know wha' *ain't* yer! But *I* know wha's a waiting for you 'pon de Santee. *Yer*, de sodger, Whig and tory, eat up de pig—nebber le' 'em grow to running fat; *dar*, on de Santee, de pig is so plenty dat—dat he eat up de sodger!"

"Ki! de Lawd ha' massy. Oh! da!"

"It's a trute. De pig dar is so fat and sassy, dat he fair ax you for eat 'em. He dun no wha' for do wid hese'f. You jis' hab for knock 'em down as he run for sabe you' se'f. Ef you don't, you wake up in de morning, and you ain't fin' yourse'f 'tall—only leettle eend o' youse'f—de pig is eat de res'."

"Ki! de Lawd delibber us! Who ebber yer ob sich country befo'."

"It's a trute, my sisteren. But de pig ain't all. De cawn grow jis' at de bery sight ob de hoe; de chicken crow jis' as he shak' off de shell; de 'simmon [persimmon] so tick, dat you kin catch twenty-seben and fifteen 'possum and coon a' night on de same tree; and der's no eend to sich eatable leettle varmints as de squirll and rabbit. Dem you knocks ober wid little stick when you is walking 'bout in de sunset."

A pause—giving opportunity to the full and fervid expression of applause.

"An' it's 'p'inted for me, brudderen and sisteren, 'Bram, to show you de way to dat most blessed splendiferous country ob meat and molasses. And jis' you follow me—do de ting I tell you—lie close when I say—'Nigger's, dem dam tory is about;' and push forward, quick as *runner* [black snake] when I say

"Now's de time for shaking de rheumatic out ob de legs'—and I carries you safe I tell you, to dat heabben ob a country. Is you willing, I axes?—brudderen and sisteren, le' me yer from you. Is you willing to eat pig? Da's de fuss question."

The acclamatory and affirmative grunt was unanimous.

"Meat and molasses; coon and 'possum; pork and purtatoes; hog and hom'ny; lightwood a plenty, and de beautifullest and tickest swamp in de wo'ld. Enty dese is excelling beautiful tings for sensible nigger?"

The eloquence of 'Bram was irresistible. He supplied all the deficiencies in the argument of Sinclair.

That night the whole force of the plantation—leaving only the coachman, cook, and one maid-servant, who were destined to attend the ladies when they went—disappeared before midnight. A little covered wagon contained the children, and the provisions necessary for the support of the whole party along the route. 'Bram had his instructions. He was to travel only by night; to lie close in swamp or thicket during the day; to avoid the great thoroughfares; use *neighborhood roads* or open pine woods when he could, and strike for the ferry known as Nelson's. It was feared that the upper ferries, might be in possession of the enemy. His route was to be sinuous, and he was not to hurry forward in the face of any risk. His supply of provisions was ample for an encampment of ten days. We need but add, that 'Bram was equal to the task, and knew all the sinuosities of the country. He was also scout enough to know how to take cover in season, and he rarely forgot his precaution. Leaving him to pursue his course according to his own discretion, Sinclair addressed himself to such duties as remained to him at Holly-Dale.

The morning after 'Bram's departure, St. Julien rode in with his troopers. His report showed him to have been busy. He had dispersed a small gathering of tories at Dean's swamp, securing a few prisoners, and a score or two of broad swords and rifles. Coulter, it seems, had had a brush with the black dragoons of Captain Quash, had cut up a score of them, and in a personal encounter with Quash, had the satisfaction of cropping off one of his ears, in a well-intended sabre-stroke at his head. Quash was a negro, captain of one of the few corps of negroes whom the British had

ventured to uniform. He had a very pretty command, sable and scarlet, of forty-five troopers, but though runaways and ruffians, they were not found very serviceable, being always more successful in the onslaught upon a hen-roost than upon any game customers.

The arrival of St. Julien enabled Sinclair to furnish a proper escort for the ladies in their progress to the Santee. This had been a subject of some embarrassment with him till this moment, since the orders of Marion and Rutledge required his own presence at camp. Great events were ripening, and the necessities of Greene and his policy, required that he should draw his forces to a head, in order to a demonstration upon Rawdon, who, it was now understood, was embarrassed in various ways — was himself an invalid — with troops exhausted by forced marches in midsummer, and not a few of them very much indisposed to the service. The Irish troops at once raw and mutinous, were a great source of uneasiness and apprehension.

It may be necessary, at this stage of our narrative, and for the better comprehension of its details in future, to take a brief survey of the relative condition of the two great warring parties in the state. We have seen that Rawdon, after relieving the post of Ninety-Six, has been compelled to abandon it. His resources did not suffer him to retain a position so remote from the seaboard, which he could not adequately garrison; and he well knew that, as soon as he should begin his return to the Lower Country, the several American forces would again concentrate about the position, the fall of which would then be inevitable, and would lose to him a body of troops, which his present exigency would not suffer him to spare. Accordingly, calling around him the loyalist chiefs of the precinct, a fierce and hardy class with numerous followers, he advised them of the necessity which required that he should abandon the place. This was equivalent to their abandonment to a fate which their own provocations well assured them would be a merciless one. The alternative that remained to them was flight. They recognised the melancholy necessity, and prepared with their wives and little ones to depart from their ancient homesteads. To cover their departure from the American patriots, Rawdon left behind him one half of his army, from twelve to fifteen hundred men,

under the conduct of Cruger, the colonel who had so long, and with so much courage and ability, defended the post of Ninety-Six. This force was to follow him as soon as the fugitive people were prepared for their painful exodus. No long time was needed for preparation, in fact could not be allowed, since they had every reason to apprehend the early return of the American army. Rawdon, meanwhile, set out with a rapidity of movement which almost threatened the destruction of his army—fifty of his men falling dead in their tracks, during a five-days' march, the victims to the terrible heat of the season, and that degree of fatigue which admitted of no recuperation. His course once ascertained, his force was such as might be controlled readily by that of Greene. To escape this danger was one reason for the rapidity of his march. His further purpose was co-operation, by a particular day, with Colonel Stewart, who, with a large detachment and convoy of provisions, was instructed, marching from Charleston, *via* Orangeburg, to meet him at Granby by the third of July. Cruger, meanwhile, was already on the march from Ninety-Six, and directing his columns for the route between the Edistos on the way to Orangeburg.

With the first knowledge of the course taken by Rawdon, Greene's army was put in motion to overtake him. At Winnsborough, the American general disembarrassed his pursuit of all unnecessary baggage, of everything that might impede his progress, and, under the command of General Huger, the army pressed forward for the Congarees. Greene, himself, with a small escort of cavalry moving in advance of his army, with special celerity in the hope of finding the command of Colonel Washington (cavalry) with which, and other resources, he meditated a special enterprise against the convoy and re-enforcements designed for the relief of Rawdon.

The latter, alarmed at these movements, increased the celerity of his own, and reached Granby two days sooner than he expected, and accordingly long before Colonel Stewart could possibly reach the same place. Intercepted letters had apprized the Americans that Stewart could not make the junction with his superior at the contemplated time. Meanwhile, the American cavalry, in which arm the patriots held a vast superiority, had succeeded in cutting that of the British to pieces, a disaster

which rendered Rawdon far more uneasy and apprehensive than before. Up to the occurrence of this event his policy had been adopted to establish himself upon the Congaree, circumscribing his operations in the interior to the space comprised within the Edisto to the west, and the Congaree and Santee to the north and east. But, with the loss of his cavalry, the failure to procure provisions or intelligence—for the forayers of Marion and Sumter swept all the highways—the audacity of the American cavalry, the rapid approach of the hostile army, and by this time advised of the inability of Stewart to meet him at the time appointed, Lord Rawdon felt that the power was no longer in his hands which would enable him to choose his own position. It became necessary that he should press down toward Orangeburg with all despatch, if he would save his detachments, or escape the dangers which were accumulating about himself. His situation was becoming desperate, and the forced marches which he was required to undertake, in which so many of his troops succumbed, were necessary to the safety of his whole force.

To place himself in advance of Rawdon, with all his mounted men, dart below and strike at Stewart and his convoy, on their advance from Charleston, was the obvious policy of Greene. Wanting in cavalry, the British general had no means of arresting or retarding this progress, for the proper performance of which Greene proceeded to put all his resources in requisition. Lee was to hasten to a junction with Washington, and Sumter and Middleton were to co-operate in the same object—the destruction of Stewart. It would be curious to the military student, and highly instructive, to see how these plans, well conceived as they were, all ultimately failed; and chiefly through that lack of method and due subordination of the agents and accessories to the principal, which is the chief vice in militia and volunteer organizations. Neither Middleton nor Lee joined Washington, and the latter employed himself, almost unnecessarily, in front of Rawdon's advance, endeavoring fruitlessly to retard his march. Sumter was engaged above in an independent enterprise on the Catawba, and when Washington was finally diverted from harassing the march of Rawdon, and sought the co-operation of Marion, the time had passed. But

we must not anticipate. Marion, with four hundred mounted men made his appearance at Washington's headquarters with wonderful promptness. Greene arrived soon after, and taking command of their united forces, he resolved to lead the enterprise against Stewart in person. Pressing down the Orangeburg road, on the sixth of July, he succeeded in passing Rawdon, and reserving to himself a company of Washington's cavalry, with which to watch the progress of the British army, he despatched Marion with his mounted men to the encounter with Stewart.

This brings us to the period of pause in our story. At the moment, therefore, when it became necessary for Mrs. Travis and her daughter to quit Holly-Dale, six separate bodies of troops, each considerable in number, were approaching the precinct; the purpose of all being equally concentred in our little village of Orangeburg. Rawdon and Cruger from above, each with twelve or fifteen hundred regular troops, the latter accompanied by a swarm of auxiliary loyalists; Stewart from below, with a detachment of five hundred, the strength and utility of which were necessarily curtailed by the encumbrance of a lengthened convoy; Marion's and Washington's commands; the main army of the Americans, under Huger, following close upon the heels of Rawdon; while Pickens, with a force of mounted gun-men, was equally earnest in pressing upon the heels of Cruger. These details will sufficiently answer to show the reader by what influences the action of our dramatis personæ is liable to be controlled, what are the embarrassments before them, and what the succoring agencies upon which they may call, in the moment of exigency. They will also explain the urgency of that necessity which required Sinclair to make his way to the camp, subduing his feelings, and foregoing his own purposes, in obedience to those of the country.

It was with no pleasant emotions that he prepared to depart from the pleasant homestead which still contained for him so many precious associations. Love—and, dragoon as he was, he was by no means insensible to the tenderest infirmities of that all-subjugating passion;—apprehension—for how could he anticipate the events which were to occur, of annoyance or positive danger, accompanying the doubtful progress of his

sweetheart and her mother across the country?—grief and anxiety for the loss and absence of Henry Travis, of whose fate nothing could be known—these were sufficient to afflict and render our major of dragoons unhappy, without even glancing at the minor cares and embarrassments which yet taxed his mind and increased his apprehensions—as, for example, the progress of the negroes of Travis, under the guidance of Abram. True, Abram was faithful, and shrewd beyond the usual capacity and virtues of his race; but, though a good scout, he was a poor soldier, and the only calculations which could be predicated of this trust must rest wholly on the natural cunning of the fellow, his fidelity, and perfect knowledge of the woods.

Sinclair, of course, used all his resources and exercised all his forethought in order to meet the various duties before him. His *fiancée* and her mother he intrusted to the charge of one whom he knew to be a brave and good soldier and a noble gentleman; in respect to Henry Travis, Jim Ballou, the best scout in the service, was upon his trail; and he had no reason to doubt that 'Bram could worm his way across the country, so as to escape the troops of Stewart on the one hand and the forces of Rawdon on the other. These were the chief dangers that threatened to cross his path. Of outlying parties of the tories he had little fear whenever the main armies were in the precinct. On such occasions the forayers usually disappeared, or melted away, and became merged in the greater masses; as is the case usually with outsiders, or third parties in politics, when an election (which is a battle) approaches. At all events, whether satisfied with his arrangements or not, Sinclair was compelled to be content with what had been done, and, having given his last instructions to St. Julien, to prepare for his own hurried departure for camp. A select troop of twenty-five men was left with St. Julien, while the residue, somewhat swollen by recruits from the troop of Inglehardt, he reserved for his own command.

It was a trying moment, that which called for the departure of Sinclair from Holly-Dale. Bertha Travis was a damsel of great strength of character, great serenity of mood, calm, patient, resolute, yet loving and docile. She inherited these virtues

from her mother. Neither of them gave way utterly to their sorrows, yet felt them so much the more acutely. They had surely sufficient cause to mourn. In how few hours had their home of pleasantness and peace been changed to one of anxiety, grief, and apprehension. Sinclair could feel for them. Perhaps, of all three, he showed the most despondency at parting. The first burst of grief over, the mother grew to hope. Her prayer now was for performance. Could she be doing now—could she engage in the search after her son—an idea that more than once agitated her brain—she would have been easier in spirit. As it was, she could only implore Sinclair to activity, and he—he could only promise, with, possibly, so many mental reservations, none of which he dared to express—that the promise might well be regarded as a dream. But he did promise, and with the full purpose to perform. He was no laggard, no sham of a man; but earnest, daring, resolute. Be sure that he will attempt—do if possible—much more than he ever promises.

And Bertha? Oh! how calmly, sweetly, resignedly, she murmured her farewell upon his shoulder—in his very bosom. It might be the last. Poor Bertha! She too thought to be doing. Oh! if she were but a man! Yet the thought as she looked upon Sinclair, seemed something worse than an absurdity. Yet she schooled it into a subdued desire to be with him—to see him perform the tasks of manhood—strike for her brother—rescue the dear boy from the enemy—from his miserable captivity. It was the prime source and secret of her strength and calmness, that she never once doubted he would do this. Oh! that precious faith of the loving young heart that confides so much in the being whom it loves—that believes him equal to all emergencies—that finds heroism in his look and gesture, and, in every period has no doubt that the world possesses at least one demigod.

How silent, sad, precious sweet, was their parting, as Sinclair rode off with his troop at break of day.

"Willie," was the murmur of the dear girl, "oh! Willie, remember my poor mother. She looks to you."

"I will never forget her."

The last words of the mother:—

"Willie Sinclair, bring me back my boy—my boy!"

They rang in the ears of our major of dragoons at every step which increased the distance between him and Holly-Dale.

And he was gone—gone from sight—and then, in the solitude of her chamber, Bertha Travis shed bitter, bitter tears. It was only with his departure that she grew hopeless. But the mother's hopes seemed to grow with his absence.

"He will bring Henry back," she murmured to Bertha, in the lowest tones, as if she feared that the walls would hear and interpose.

The next day, in the stately family carriage, drawn by four stout blooded bays, and driven by Cato, of great frame and bulk, and singular in the possession of one eye only, Mrs. Travis, her daughter and maid, took their departure from Holly-Dale, under the escort of St. Julien. We must not at present think to note their course, or follow their fortunes. This concern will employ us possibly hereafter. Meanwhile, even then, the advance of Cruger, consisting of mounted loyalists, hungry and sullen, was entering the territory lying between the two Edistos, and pressing down toward Orangeburg. That day, old Kit Rowe carried off the chattels which he had *purchased*, under secret articles. Three nights afterward Holly-Dale was in ashes. So much for the tender mercies of the tories.

CHAPTER XL.

THE SCOUT—THE FUGITIVES—THE TRAIL.

JIM BALLOU swept the swamp forest tract lying between Holly-Dale and Four-Mile creek, with the close and eager eye of a hawk. Nothing escaped his scrutiny. He could find very decided *signs*, where you and I would see nothing but smooth surface. We can not detail his process, or follow all his steps, or note the thousand minutiæ which drew his attention, or diverted it, as he sped. It will suffice if we mention that in reviewing the route over which the scouting party had gone the night before, he at length found the *bay* where Inglehardt had established his rendezvous, and on the edge of which, where the Trailer had held Travis in durance vile. He saw that some uses had been made of the place. He noted where the steeds of the fugitives had been fastened. He followed the course which they had been conducted when finally carried off, until he reached the creek, and under the fringy willows along its margin, discovered where the dugout had been run up, with her nose stuck lightly into the pliant ooze of the swamp. He identified the impression as the same with that made by the dugout at Holly-Dale. He had thus gained one step. He did not lose it. He now noted all the impressions of the miry tract about him. He found where the horses had been led down to the spot where the creek enters the river, and into the river when made to swim or wade across beside the boat. He examined especially the tracks of the horses. Each one was found to have some distinguishing mark by which it could be tracked hereafter. In one in particular, a fragment of the shoe was gone. In another, the rivet was awkwardly curled and obtrusive; in a third, a nail was wanting. He so studied each that recognition would instantly follow his encounter with them on any future occasion.

He found the tracks of Inglehardt and the negro boy Julius, and there were the huge feet, broad as an elephant's, of Devil Dick, and there were the long narrow footmarks of the Trailer.

"Got 'em all here—all here!" said the soliloquizing scout, with a chuckle of satisfaction. "If I could only keep 'em now! They've crossed! that's clear—for they couldn't be taking the nags down stream nor up. They've crossed! And good reason for it too—good reason. This side the river was too hot for 'em. Well, they've crossed. But do they stick there! That's the question—question. I must nose 'em out before I walk into their camp—nose 'em out! Must wait till dark—dark; then swim across—swim—put in a leetle above—then snake down upon 'em—snake down from above. I see just where to put in—just; the old ford will answer. But shall I want my horse? I reckon. They'll put out, and I must after 'em. Yes, must have the horse. So! we'll see if nobody's found the old fellow out in his hiding-place. Found him out. We'll take the ford, hide the critter above, snake down and nose 'em out. Got their measure—all. Devil Dick's foot, Inglehardt's, Trailer's, nigger's. Must see I don't find 'em too sudden. Four to one—four. But I can snake 'em. It's only a fool nigger that grunts as he goes—hog fashion—grunts as he goes. The dog that hunts the deer has a reason for giving tongue: but where its wolf or tiger, set the teeth down, fast as a trap, even if you bite off the tongue. Snake down, and nose close; nose close and snake down. Got the measure of every rascal's foot in all the gang—every rascal's foot."

We suppose that everybody can gather Ballou's policy from his soliloquy. He resolved upon his course, while gazing from close covert, a little before sunset, across the Edisto to the point opposite the mouth of Four-Mile Branch. He noted with understanding eye, every detail which might possibly affect his future operations.

"They've struck inside that bank t'other side. They've pushed for the close thicket behind it. There's a great dead cypress just over it, with one big arm p'inting out down the river. I must look out for that cypress. It stands just over a mighty big laurel, and I reckon its sandy and swampy about, all hammocky. Good for snaking."

A couple of hours enabled him to find his horse in the thicket where he had hidden him, and afforded him the darkness requisite for his safe progress across the river. Fastening his horse in the swamp over a mile above the place of supposed harborage of the fugitives and their captives, Ballou proceeded to "snake down" upon their camp.

His calculations had proved correct in most particulars. He found his dead cypress, his living laurel, his hammocky harboring places, and the spot where the horses had been landed. But the birds had flown. Their nests were all warm—the trail was fresh—"hot" as Ballou phrased it—but they themselves had disappeared. Ballou slept that night in the camp which they had deserted. The further pursuit of his game required daylight.

With the dawn he was at work on hands and knees, identifying the tracks of the fugitives. He found them all; found the traces of two boats upon the bank instead of one, and traced the course of the horses for a hundred yards up the river. He then began to reason out the logical issues from his facts.

A good scout is a good logician. His premises found, he will work out the results in a manner to put to shame half the lawyers in the land. Ballou said:—

"Now, we have 'em again, certain. If we can only keep 'em now. What was they to do? Here was Willie Sinclair dashing down with a smart troop upon Orangeburg; another party up at Holly-Dale: there was no safety up or down for a matter of five miles. A party of four can't stop long, with an inimy's troop each side of 'em. They've dropped below, most of 'em, in the canoes, and gone down from ten to twenty miles. They've made a fetch round Orangeburg with the horses, and I reckon two men's carried them round, and two have gone down with the prisoners. They've just gone fur enough to be out of reach from a dash, and not too fur for the men that have the horses to get to them by daylight. That's not more than ten miles I reckon. Then they've landed on this side; for you see, they won't want to be crossing the horses to t'other side; there's no sense in taking such useless trouble; and then, it's natural sense and reason that Inglehardt will be for keeping this side, where he can soonest make Orangeburg, and be safest out

of the way of Coulter, ten miles below. They could drop down there in three hours easy. They've made their calculations. I reckon they cut loose three hours before daylight. They've got a day's start of me. Well! It's to be done. I must follow the horses, for a boat leaves so narrow a trail on the water that it's mighty hard to find it in hot weather—in hot weather."

And he took the track of the horses.

"Lord," said he, as he noted the course thus pursued by the fugitives, and how nigh it had taken them to Orangeburg—"Lord! if Willie Sinclair had only knowd what I know! How he could ha' gobbled 'em up—every mother's son of 'em. Only half a mile from the village, sneaking round, just, I reckon, when he was a gutting it! Oh! the blindness of these dragoon soldiers. They're fit for nothing but a charge—nothing but a charge."

And, soliloquizing at every half turn, our scout stole forward through swamp and thicket, never once losing the trail upon which he had fastened, until it led him into the deepest swamps of the river about ten miles below the village. As soon as he found the trail turning certainly down to the river, he sought out a close thicket and harbored his horse securely. The rest of his scrutiny in the precinct required to be pursued on foot. He had not once lost the trail. It led him to the river's edge. He saw where the two boats had left the measure of their prows upon the banks. He noted once more the footsteps of the party. But the camp was again deserted. The fugitives were vigilant. He followed their progress upward to the highland—saw where they had passed into the main road—one of the avenues from Charleston to the village—and where they were lost, utterly indistinguishable from the thousand tracks of horse, and mule, and cattle, man and beast, which makes of the route through a light soil in the piney regions, a mere sinuous stripe of sand, in which one impression with the help of the breeze rapidly effaces another. Inglehardt and his party were no doubt somewhere abroad in the world of space and swamp and forest, but where? Our scout no doubt summoned up the echoes to his soliloquy, but he did not look to them for his response. He had once more to look to his logic.

Meanwhile, let us look back, and endeavor to supply the de

tails which our scout, with all his sagacity, could not altogether grasp in his conjectures with regard to the progress of the fugitives. When Inglehardt and his party were all safely landed on the opposite side of the river the night when they were so closely pressed by Sinclair's scouts, he at once called his companions into consultation. The result of this conversation, was to put their captives into their two boats—one having been found on the opposite shore. The father and son, equally ignorant of each other's condition were still kept apart, and placed in separate vessels. In one of these Inglehardt bestowed himself; the other was confided to Dick of Tophet. To the Trailer and Julius, the negro, were allotted the task of bringing down the horses. Armed each with a paddle, Inglehardt and Dick set their skiffs in motion. The labor was small, the paddle being used rather to guide than to work the vessels, the current propelling them downward at an average rate of four miles an hour. They reached a point agreed on, some time before the Trailer and his horses, landed themselves and their captives, the latter still kept separate, and suffered the boats to make their farther way down stream as they might. They housed themselves in a thicket, laid their captives in silence under separate trees, and stretched themselves out for rest if not for slumber. It was an hour after daylight before the Trailer made his appearance, with Julius and the horses.

It was with a stubborn silence, and the noble fortitude of a soldier, not unprepared for reverses, that Captain Travis bore up under his captivity, and during the long period of humiliation, when, no longer a free agent in any respect, kept in complete ignorance of any of the facts in his condition except his captivity, and capable of only imperfect conjectures as to his whereabouts—he was treated more like a bale of luggage than a human and intelligent being—lifted from boat to shore, from shore to boat, from boat to shore again, and tumbled carelessly from stalwart shoulders upon the ground to brood in silence upon his painful situation, his limbs all stiffened and sore from restraint, and his flesh irritated with the cords that threatened to cut into it. His pride suffered him to offer no remonstrance. His knowledge of his captors taught him that it would be idle. He had but to endure with all the philosophy and fortitude

within his command. He was sustained by the conviction which he felt, that, though he himself was a loser in the game, his enemy was yet foiled in his attempts upon his daughter, Rutledge, and Willie Sinclair. He exulted, in his bonds, at the idea that Inglehardt had experienced a mortifying defeat, with the loss of nearly all his troop. This conviction could not be a mistaken one. The stealthy progress of his captor, his isolation, want of means and followers, all led him to the true conclusion. So far, he was consoled; nay, held himself a gainer by the result, though he had lost his own point in the game. He did not yet know all!

The boy too, Henry Travis, was sustained beyond his strength and years, by the consciousness of the first development of his powers; by the pride of his incipient mannishness; by a resolute determination not to suffer his enemies to discern that his young heart was sore, and his young soul apprehensive. He tasked his thought momently to teach him how to endure bravely, and to defy his captors to the last. He was resolved to play the soldier in the captive.

But he felt his constraint in pain. His bonds hurt his limbs; his position fevered him; his sinews were not yet hardened for endurance, and his heart suffered in sympathy with his body. It required all his ambitious thoughts and courage to keep him from the displays of weakness which he felt; and when he happened to think of his mother, and her grief and apprehension, the tears rose into his eyes; his heart filled; he felt like choking with his sobs! But he choked them down. He would not have his enemy exult in his sufferings. He strove to think of Willie Sinclair and his hardihood, and his teachings; of his daring valor; the sweep of his great broadsword; and that fierce cry of exulting rage with which he led the charge against the enemy, the first that the boy had ever witnessed; and his young soul beat and bounded with the thought:—

"Oh! if Willie Sinclair would but come!" But this soon subsided to another that brought back all his weakness:—

"My poor mother! She does not know what has happened to me. She will think they have killed me. My poor, poor mother!"

He as little dreamed of his father's condition, so near him,

fettered like himself, as the father dreamed of his! And their strength to endure was in part due to their mutual ignorance.

And both slept in the brief hour that they lay beneath the trees on the banks of the river, while Inglehardt waited for the appearance of the Trailer with the horses. They slept from exhaustion. For that brief interval they forgot their pain and captivity. Their instincts never once taught them, that, not twenty feet apart, they lay opposite to each other.

Their captors were the first to awaken. It is possible that *they* had not slept at all. They were bustling about when Travis first opened his eyes. He saw Inglehardt coming up from the river where he had been bathing; he was only half dressed, and was rubbing head and face with a towel. Dick of Tophet was counting bullets from one hand to the other. They chatted together at a short distance from their captives.

Seeing but these, Captain Travis closed his eyes again as if to shut out a disagreeable prospect. But he soon reopened them on hearing a wild cry from the foot of the great red oak in front of him. He had raised his head to look around him. At that moment Henry Travis opened his eyes and gazed about the scene confusedly. His sense seemed to take in his situation slowly. He stared at his father with bewildering sensations, closed his eyes again, again opened them — then, as if he had finally grasped the fact fairly, he cried out in a voice of anguish,

"Oh! father, have they got you too?"

The father again raised his head, and made a desperate effort to raise himself up, writhed violently in his bonds, and sunk back. He could only murmur —

"My son! my son! Oh! God be merciful! My son! my son!"

The son again spoke:—

"Father! *are* you tied like me?"

The person addressed writhed once more in his bonds, making a powerful effort to free his arms.

"'Twon't do, cappin," said Dick of Tophet, jeeringly, as he drew nigh, "'twon't do. The hitch is too good and the line too strong, for a small man. Ef you was a young Samson now, you might work through it; but you ain't what you was twenty years ago, and I reckon you never was much in heft and

sinew. Better take it easily, for a plough-line is mighty cutting ef you works much agin it."

"Villain, why do you tie that child?" was the howl rather than the speech of the father.

"Child!" said Dick; "he's a blasted for'ard one, if he's a child; and leetle cocksparrow as he is, I reckon he tumbled more than one good fellow, with his d——d little shooting-irons yesterday. Child! Blast my daylights, ef he didn't come mighty nigh to knocking daylight out of my own eyes intirely yesterday."

"And if he had, 'twould have saved the rope a burden and a task hereafter. But where's your master—where's Inglehardt?—put him before me, that I may speak to his base soul touching the cruel usage of that boy."

"Good morning, Captain Travis," said Inglehardt in his quietest and mildest tones, now emerging from the rear—"I am glad to see you looking so bright this morning, after your fatigues of the night and the day before. When I reflect that you have had nothing to eat since yesterday at breakfast, and have been ever since in rather a constrained position, it is wonderful to me how elastic you appear. Excuse me that the necessities of the service have not suffered me to provide the necessary creature comforts. But you will forgive me when you learn that I need them quite as much as yourself. However, we shall shortly have a little breakfast, and that will put us in better condition for travel. That you have not suffered relieves me greatly. It is perfectly delightful to see how fresh you are this morning!"

"Inglehardt," said Travis, with hoarse and choking accents—"*we* are enemies, that I understand; *I* am in your power. For myself, I have no plea to make, no prayer to offer; but why have you made a prisoner of that boy—that mere child—torn him from his mother—roped his little limbs, like a felon?"

"Child! Rather a stout child, Travis, and shoots a pistol like a buccaneer. You disparage the son of your loins—your first-born!"

"He is a child—but fifteen! Release him, Inglehardt—let him go to his mother. As a man you should feel shame

only in subjecting him to such treatment. Of what use keep him. I pledge myself that he will return quietly to his mother. For myself, I ask nothing. I submit to my fate."

"It is verily a good spirit—that of resignation, and the more you exercise it, Travis, the better. You are in a bad way. You played bravely, fearlessly, and with excellent skill. You have lost, and the stakes are forfeited. Your life was on the game, Travis!"

"No matter about my life! The boy! the boy! He has played no such game. He has incurred no such penalties. Release him—send him home. It is the shame of manhood that his tender limbs are thus corded."

"You mistake, Travis. He, too, has had his game—has probably the life of one or more men to answer for. *His* stakes are also forfeit; but these do not involve his life. He must undergo the fate of all prisoners—must wait exchange. But, farther, he is no prisoner of mine. Mr. Andrews, there, is his captor."

"Pshaw! You do not mean to impose upon me the silly idea that the private of a troop exercises a discretion on such a subject independently of his superior?"

"You may believe what you please. It is enough to repeat that Mr. Andrews is not in my troop, and exercises his own discretion in his adventures. His accountability is elsewhere. The boy is his prisoner."

"Ay, but you can move him, Inglehardt, to do *your* pleasure rather than his own."

"Humph! perhaps; but I see not that the claims of Captain Travis, or any of his family, are sufficiently strong to make it my pleasure to gratify their wishes."

"Good God! Inglehardt," said the other, now beginning to comprehend his enemy, "can it be that you look to the detention of that child as one of the means by which to gratify your purposes?"

"Oh! my dear Captain Travis, my purposes are all very innocent. I trust to make it equally your pleasure and policy to see that they are gratified."

"Great God! have I lived for this? My boy! my boy!"

Such was the ejaculation, hoarse and convulsive, of the fa

ther, as, half-crawling and half-rolling, both arms and legs being tightly corded, the boy scrambled over the space that separated the two, and flung himself moaning into his father's lap. No clasp—no embrace—no caresses, awaited him. The limbs of Travis were as tightly fettered as his own; but he stooped over, and pressed his lips upon the cheeks and forehead of the boy, then burst into a sobbing convulsion. The hard man was terribly softened. Dick of Tophet looked inquiringly at Inglehardt. The latter smiled faintly and turned away, walking silently out toward the high ground. The ruffian followed him, after a brief pause, with hurried steps, and the two conferred together out of hearing of the captives.

"I say, cappin," began Joel Andrews—"I reckon there's no use in keeping the boy, since you've got the father. He's only a trouble, and always in the way."

"Eh? what? No use! My good fellow, you have no idea of the uses of useless things. We'll make him very useful.'

"I don't see how, cappin."

"Eh! you don't? You will open your eyes to a discovery then before very long. Why, man, don't you already see how the father softens? Before he saw the boy he was stubborn as a rock: now he melts and flows like running water."

"But what's the use of his melting to us? We've got him, and kin always manage to make his rock melt—"

"Ay, so long as we keep the son. Enough, Dick; you seem wonderfully disposed to melt yourself. But we can't afford it, Dick. We must keep all our captives, big and little. They are so much capital for both of us. It'll make the boy strong and hardy to give him a little training as a prisoner; and you see he wishes to be a soldier. No school like adversity for that, Dick. As for the father—d—n him!—the melting process must begin now or never. We can not manage him else. I tell you, we must coin his heart up, drop by drop—all the blood in it—till we bring him to a sensible condition. Through that boy we subdue him. His ransom will pay you well; the father's will pay me. You shall know hereafter how we shall manage it."

Dick of Tophet still looked inquiringly, but his superior seemed nowise disposed to continue the subject. It was not

often that Inglehardt permitted himself to swear, and the fact of his having done so, struck the ruffian with some surprise. He could now perceive that there were mixed motives and emotions at work prompting Inglehardt to measures, in respect to the two captives, for which he could not definitely account. Dick of Tophet turned back to the prisoners, between whom, meanwhile, a long and touching conversation had taken place, which the approach of the ruffian interrupted. But he, appearing to see this, continued his walk to the river, and the two resumed their speech. The boy had given his father a full account, as far as he had arrived at the particulars, of all that had taken place at Holly-Dale. There was much that he did not know, but he could speak positively of the general result of the affair. Old Travis was confirmed in his belief that Inglehardt had been defeated, and that Rutledge and Sinclair had not only escaped the snare, but had turned the petard of the tory-captain upon himself.

"And, oh! father, if you could have seen how we made 'em skip. You should have seen *our* charge! How we came down upon 'em, and scattered them every way! They've got us, it's true, but that's all! I don't think that Inglehardt's got half a dozen men left. The dragoons of Willie Sinclair cut 'em down, right and left, just as the hurricane throws the trees."

"Oh! my son, you forget that Inglehardt has a full corps of mounted-riflemen now in Rawdon's army. They'll be down before long, and then he'll be stronger than ever."

"But they'll have to exchange us, father. Willie Sinclair will see to that. He's got enough of the tories in his hands to exchange for us a dozen times over."

Travis shook his head despondingly. He saw what the boy could not. He rightly conjectured the policy of the tory-captain, and was about to deliver it, when he reflected that it would only serve unnecessarily to dishearten the child, and add the anxieties of a new doubt to a condition already sufficiently depressing. The tearful eyes of the boy looking up into his own, the tremulous eagerness of his lip, the soft, girlish delicacy of his cheek, its peachy hue—all expressive of innocence and gentleness, such as we seek to protect from harsh

encounter and biting winds—made the father careful to sustain and encourage rather than depress his hope, and he said:—

"Yes, Henry, there can be no question but that Willie Sinclair will soon relieve us. But you must now take your real lessons as a soldier. You must expect some trials of your strength and courage. Be of good cheer, and do not suffer anything you see or hear to alarm you. We are in rough hands, and it is one of the arts of such people to overcome the souls of their captives—their principles—through their fears. Keep a stout heart, and bear manfully your troubles."

"Oh! father, if you had seen me when we made the rush on them fellows! Why, when I heard the bugle sound, and the cry of our lieutenant to charge, I had no more fear—I thought only how to get a-head of the rest."

"Ah! my son, it is easier to face an enemy, with the bugles blowing in one's ears than to endure bonds. The charge warms the blood, but cords and chains chill and enfeeble it."

"Yes, indeed! Oh! my father. I never felt how sweet freedom was, till these cords were on my wrists and legs!"

The approaching tramp of horses silenced the conversation. Anon, Dick of Tophet was seen speeding up from the river. He joined Inglehardt on the higher land, where he was awaiting the Trailer and Julius who soon appeared through the trees bringing the horses. He brought a basket of provisions, baked biscuit of corn, the fragment of a boiled ham, and half-a-dozen eggs, boiled hard, with a morsel of salt in a paper. These he had picked up somewhere on the route, at the house of some friendly tory. It is just probable that the *prog* may have been stolen from the cupboard of some doubtful patriot.

It was no intention of Inglehardt to starve his captives. A portion of the breakfast was assigned them, and the cords were taken from their hands while they ate.

"Eat, Henry," said the father, seeing the boy disinclined, "a good stomach is necessary to a captive. Eat! you will need all your strength."

And he set the boy an example of good trencher service. While they ate, Julius, the negro-boy, stood watching them from a little distance. The runaway felt some twinges of conscience at beholding them. They both saw him, but as if by

tacit understanding, they made no remark. When the repast was over, and the horses made ready for a new start—Dick of Tophet said, with an air of ruffianly indifference:—

"I reckon, cappin, we needn't cord up the prisoners, ef so be they'll only give their word of honor, that they won't try to git off."

But Inglehardt preferred the security of cords to words. He did not, however, answer the suggestion in the hearing of the captives. There was a feeling of shame, perhaps, that made him silent. Apart from them, he replied to Andrews:—

"We must risk nothing. Travis is a sly rascal. He won't feel bound by any pledges to us. He'll argue that we have no right to exact them. Besides, Dick, we've got to melt the rock you remember. To bring Travis to the right condition of mind. I must make him very fearful. I must bring him to his knees through his terrors."

"But the boy—"

"It is only through the boy that we can work upon the father's terrors. He has no fears for himself. We must make him fearful for the boy. Remember that, Dick. You must second me in waking up his fears."

Dick of Tophet, ruffian as he was, was a little at a loss to see how this was to be done; but he was not willing that his superior should suppose him inexperienced and ignorant.

"Oh! very well. Only jest you say what's got to be done. That's all."

"At present, we have only got to secure them on horseback. Mount them with free legs and then tie the legs fast under the belly of the horse. We can guide the horses for them."

And in this fashion the two captives were mounted. Travis expostulated in behalf of his son; pledged himself that the boy would not attempt escape, but he was not listened to. Inglehardt rode on a-head. It was in vain that the commissary demanded an interview with his old associate.

They were gone from the scene, as we are already aware, when, conducted by his unerring instincts, or, rather, the unerring logic of the scout, Jim Ballou came upon the ground. He tracked the party, as we have seen, up to the point where they passed from the woods into the main road. Here the

tracks were all lost, in the wilderness of impressions, made by every beast that runs, upon the sandy thoroughfare. But Jim Ballou proceeded to work out his usual scout logic.

"They're not going to keep this main track," he soliloquized in a murmur as he looked about him. "They're for hiding, and they've just crossed the road to get into the lower woods. Well, we'll see, but I reckon they're quite too old at foxing to go right across, making but one step from the old track into the new one."

And our scout was right. His search directly across the road yielded him no discovery.

"As I thought," said he. "No, they've kept the road a bit, up or down, only to break off the connection. They've gone across, that's certain, for if that wasn't their plan, they needn't ha' come out of the swamp thicket to the road at all. They'd ha' just pushed on, up or down, in the same old woods. Yet here's their track to the very edge of the road. Well, it's certain they've gone across, and it's up or down. And it only needs keen sighting on t'other side, for a matter of fifty yards, more or less, to see where they come out. For they wouldn't keep the main track a minute longer than needful."

So he reasoned. His own horse was still hidden in the thicket. He was careful not to suffer his own tracks to mar those which he sought. He stepped the road carefully up and down its lower margin. Nothing escaped his eyes. They were those of one who riding at a canter through the woods will stop his horse and show you the track of deer or turkey among the leaves, and tell you just how many hours have elapsed since the animal made it. His reasoning was so nearly certain that he had no doubts of finding the trail. After a while, a low chuckle escaped him, and he raised himself erect.

"Have 'em again! I knowed it must be so. And now to find all the tracks, and see if any of 'em has broke off from the party."

And for this further object, he again addressed himself to the trail.

"All right! all together. And now for the general course."

He followed the track for a hundred yards into the woods; then, as if satisfied, he took his way back carelessly to where

his horse had been fastened. He slipped the bridle and let the animal graze. While the horse was thus employed, the scout drew from across his saddle a small buckskin sack, with two pouches, one on either side. From one of these pouches he drew a smaller sack containing a dry grainy sort of meal a few handfuls of which he swallowed. His food was a simple meal of maize and sugar, browned together over the fire, one part sugar to eight of meal. A draft from the pure sweet waters of the Edisto, swallowed with mouth buried in the running stream, which he could thus reach only by prostrating himself upon his breast with his hands grasping the roots of trees jutting from the banks into the water, satisfied his thirst; and our scout was ready to pursue the trail which he had found. But he did not immediately set off. He returned to the spot where his steed had been left to graze and seated himself quietly beneath a tree to ruminate, or sleep. For two hours he kept this position seeming to drowse, and perhaps really drowsing. At the end of this time, quietly rising up, just as if he had arranged for two hours' sleep, and could will at pleasure the duration of his slumbers, he proceeded to bit the animal and mount. A few moments after this he was in motion, taking the trail of Inglehardt's party, deep in the forests, and pushing in a southeasterly direction. We need not follow him for the present. Enough that the beagle was on the track, with the scent keen and warm, and that, if any scout can fairly keep the trail of the tory and his captives, Jim Ballou is the man to do so. The great forests soon swallowed him and them from sight.

CHAPTER XLI.

SKRIMMAGING.

VERY soon after Sinclair had left Holly-Dale—as soon after as possible—the great cumbersome family carriage of Mrs. Travis was got in readiness, and that lady and Bertha prepared to depart from the well-known and familiar places, seeking temporary refuge across the Santee. Four fine blooded bays were harnessed to the coach, which was required to bear the two ladies, the servant-maid, and the one-eyed driver, Cato. The name of the old Roman, who never distinguished himself as a *whip*, but might reasonably assert some distinctions for himself, of another sort, was yet hardly misapplied in the case of our Cato, who, very certainly had been a famous Jehu in better days. He was the only *family* negro whom Travis, as a *novus homo* could claim. He had inherited Cato in right of his wife, and, as an old family negro, the fellow was held to be faithful. This was the usual characteristic of the class. It was the "*new* negro"—the African fresh from the coast, whom it was found good policy always to distrust. Cato was not simply faithful. He was sternly and bravely so. He was fearless in the assertion of the rights of his "young missis," by which title he continued to recognise the mother of Bertha, long after the latter had entered her teens. To both, and to his master, Cato never hesitated to offer his opinions, and if necessary, his rebuke. As if conscious of his integrity and of its recognition in the family, he asserted his moral rights under it, and was just as frequently guardian and censor, in his province, as body-servant or carriage-driver.

Captain St. Julien readily comprehended the character of Cato in his first conversation with him; and a judicious understanding between the parties, at the commencement of the

journey, contemplated all the possible dangers that might happen along the route. With so many divisions of the enemy approaching the very precincts, through which the cavalcade was to pass, they might reasonably apprehend some encounters with a foe whom it was their policy to avoid.

The auspices were seemingly quite favorable when the party set forth. They crossed the Edisto at Shilling's, and soon began to press downward, inclining in toward Orangeburg, until the Caw-caw swamp should be passed, when it was the policy of St. Julien to give the village a pretty wide berth to the right, in order to escape the danger of contact with Stewart and his regiment, who were now known to be pushing up with all possible speed to the junction with Rawdon. This danger once passed, the farther progress was to be pursued along the road running across the head of the "Four-Holes," and intersecting one of the two roads leading down the country, parallel to the course of the Santee, until they should be able to strike direct for Nelson's Ferry. Once in this road, which was supposed to be in possession of Marion's parties, the progress was considered safe.

Such was the arrangement. But it was subject to contingencies. When St. Julien, timing his movements to those of the lumbersome carriage of the family, was approaching the lowest of the routes across the Caw-caw, one of his scouts rode in and gave intelligence of a considerable body of the enemy's horse on the other side. It became necessary to pursue, for the present, a route along the upper margin of the Caw-caw, keeping that stream and swamp between themselves and the unknown enemy. In sooth, our little party had a very narrow strait—almost as narrow as that bridge, Al Sirat, of the Mussulman's, which conducts to heaven—by which to pass through the converging masses of the British. There was Rawdon from above, soured by sickness, irritated by the hot weather, vexed at the failure of Stewart to join him at Granby, and altogether in very bad temper, with the world generally, and his Irish troops in particular, pressing down from Granby along the eastern side of the North Edisto; Cruger, embarrassed by the fugitive colonies of the Nine-Six loyalists, and followed closely by Pickens, seeking a junction with Rawdon, as the

only means of making himself safe; Stewart, with his regiment of buffs, and a large convoy of provisions and munitions, goading on his teams the nearest road from Charleston; and sundry scattered bodies of tories who had been busy as foragers, while Greene and Rawdon were playing for heavier stakes above.

Well might St. Julien, with his little squad of twenty-five troopers, and his burdensome coach of state with its precious inmates, feel the necessity of taking every possible precaution, in order to escape being ground to powder between the several masses then tending to a common centre. Yet, had he known! The formidable troop, from which, misled by his scout, he thought it necessary to skulk, consisted of a detachment of Marion's command, just despatched by Greene with the hope of intercepting Stewart and his convoy. Under the cover of the four hundred mounted men, whom the famous partisan led on this expedition, St. Julien might have made a safe progress, fourteen or fifteen miles; since all the country east of Stewart's route, and below the Caw-caw, was now fairly under cover of his rifles. Leaving St. Julien to his obscure road, we will take that pursued by Marion.

It was on the 6th of July that Greene succeeded in passing Lord Rawdon. Reserving to himself a single company of Washington's cavalry, simply to watch the progress of the British army, Greene despatched Marion on the expedition against Stewart. Marion kept himself usually well-informed. On the 7th of July, his scouts apprized him of the approach of Stewart, who was totally unconscious of an enemy. At midnight of the same day, Marion sallied out from his covert confident of the prey which seemed gliding fairly into his jaws, even as the fly walks into the open mouth of the crocodile. But, for once, his scouts were premature—had made themselves too secure of fortune. They had tracked the enemy to the door of the trap, but never once seemed to fancy that he might turn aside at the entrance. They had made no provision against the very event which happened. At the last moment, Stewart had a choice of roads, and influenced only by the condition of the roads themselves, and totally unapprehensive of any foe, the British colonel simply took the route which Marion

did not cover; and while the partisan swept down for his destruction along the one route, Stewart made his way upward in safety by the other. Not altogether in safety, for a dash of one of Marion's squadrons, recovering lost ground, succeeded in cutting off the rear guard, with a portion of the convoy. Stewart, himself, with the main body of his troop, entered Orangeburg on the morning of the 8th, hardly yet conscious of the danger he had escaped.

While these events were in progress, St. Julien moved forward slowly, and with great precaution. He kept his scouting parties considerably in advance. He had been some three hours only on the road, after leaving Holly-Dale, when his scouts rode in with tidings of a second British party only a mile off, consisting of some thirty men. They were reported to be putting their horses in motion; but, of their course, nothing was known. It was just possible that they might be pursuing another route; possible, that they might not cross his path. It was, perhaps, easy for him to elude them. But it was well to know who they were. They were at present in his way. They were but thirty in number, and his force was twenty-five. St Julien resolved in a single instant. He was the quietest person in the world, but the most decisive. He drew his lieutenant aside, gave him brief directions in a whisper, then watched him quietly for awhile, as he divided the command into two parts, and led them forward slowly, leaving but four troopers to follow with their captain. The squads thus moving off turned slowly into the woods on the upper side of the road, and very soon disappeared from sight.

As soon as St. Julien had seen them disappear, he rode up to the side of the carriage, and with a pleasant smile upon his lips, and a courtier-like bow, he said:—

"We are possibly to have a brush with the enemy. Our scouts report a squad of tories on the route ahead. It is needful that I should look after them. But this need not alarm you, ladies. Do not be uneasy. I make no doubt we shall readily disperse them; but, whatever the event, I have given Cato instructions what to do. He seems firm and intelligent, and should any disaster befall my command, you had better trust him implicitly."

"But will you have to fight, Captain St. Julien?" demanded Mrs. Travis, in faltering tones.

"It is very probable," was the reply.

"But, captain, could it not be avoided?"

St. Julien's face slightly reddened.

"It might! The thing is surely possible. It only needs that I should forget myself, my duty, my name, my orders, and take to flight; in which event, while I should get off safely, your carriage and party would probably fall into the hands of the pursuers."

"Nay, captain, do not mistake me. I should be the last person to desire, even for my safety, that you should do anything discreditable to manhood: and you will please remember, besides, that it is a woman who speaks, whose feminine fears must not weigh against a soldier's judgment. My only thought was that—that—really, I see, that what I would say now amounts only to what I said before—that it seems *our* best policy to avoid encounter. If we could elude the enemy——"

"Such would be *your* policy, my dear madam, and if my only duty was your escort, I should seek only your safety, at any sacrifice. But you will remember that my military duties are paramount. It is only an incidental service which keeps me beside your carriage for a while. It would not be proper for me to evade or to seek to evade any reasonable chance of striking the enemy, even though at some peril to your escort. But, in truth, we have no choice. The enemy is before us, in no great strength—in numbers hardly beyond our own. We can not pass him without a meeting. If we attempt to cross the Caw-caw, we risk the encounter with Stewart; and you have been already advised of the enemy's presence in force at the lower crossing. To turn back upon our own steps, is perhaps quite as great a danger, as we know that Rawdon is pressing down from above, and can not now be far off. You see, my dear madam, that our best policy is to seek to brush the feebler enemy from our path in front, and to delay as little in doing so as possible. Good morning, Mrs. Travis. Good morning, Miss Bertha. By the way, Miss Bertha, you may find some very pretty wild flowers in this wood. Just take your course downward for the swamp, as soon as Cato stops the carriage. He

will drive into the lower woods, so as to keep from sight of the road. A little ramble will relieve your limbs for a season. In these piney woods, where they slope down to the *bays*, you will find a great variety of flowers, and I should be pleased, on my return, to see you with a handsome bouquet. Here, at this very season, you will find the yellow orchis, which is a pretty country damsel; the passion flower may be gathered where the woods are most open; its carnation contrasts beautifully with the blue pulchra; throw a few sprigs of sensitive plant between them; and then sprinkle the white azalea around and about the cluster; the garden-shrub grows wild in all this region; the brilliant silk weed, with its rich blood tints, and the cardinal flower, will wonderfully help your variety; the yellow and purple saracenia, and the blue flag, you will gather along the swamp, but look out for snakes where you seek for these. There is a dragon that always watches over Beauty. Don't forget the "wake robbin," and the "old man's beard," the leafy green look of the one, and the snow-white fringes of the other, will greatly help the contrasts; and if you will make your girl gather you a single pond lily from the bay, for the centre of your group, you will have as beautiful a bouquet as Marie Antoinette would be proud to plant upon her toilet. Pardon me that I am not suffered to join with you in the search. I am passionately fond of flowers. I half believe them to be fallen angels—particularly these odorless wild flowers. By the way, do you know why they are so odorless and so beautiful, Miss Bertha?"

"No, indeed! Why? I am curious for the reason."

"Because they are designed as field and wayside flowers only, and thus address themselves only to the passing eye—meant only for the sight, to cheer the traveller, not to delay him—and this reminds me that I have no time to lose"—taking out his watch. "Good morning, ladies, and a pleasant ramble. Cato!"

"Sah! cappin!"

"Remember, Cato, what I have told you."

"Nebber you f'aid [afraid] cappin! I onderstands. I do wha' you tells me. He done! *I* say 'em!"

Cato waved his whip, and nodded his head with the air of

a man who *would* round his periods conclusively. But St. Julien waited for no answer. With a smile and bow to the ladies, and a finger lifted to Cato, he bent forward on his charger, gave him the spur, and followed the route which his lieutenant had pursued. He overtook his troopers as they worked forward, silent as serpents, trailing through the woods.

Not a bugle soundod; not a voice spoke above a whisper; but quietly gliding from officer to officer and man to man, St. Julien whispered the necessary orders and encouragement to all. He aimed to surprise his enemy; an achievement which he thought easy enough, after the report made by his scouts. And he proceeded to this sort of business with the same calm, subdued, and gentle manner, with which he had counselled the young damsel of the wild flowers of the region and how best to compose them into a bouquet.

"Ha!" said Cato, "he hab 'trong sense for sodger, dat same slim cappin. He no hab black eye and leetle mout' for not'ing. I see de debbil in he eye, for all he talk so softly and small jes' like a gal. He no gib too much tongue. You no yer [hear] bugle blow. He hush 'em up. He's for ambushment fight, I tell you. He guine 'trike jes' like rattlesnake!"

"But what are *we* to do, Cato?" demanded his mistress.

"Enty de cappin, he'se'f, tell you Cato is know? Nebber you min'. Jes' leff it all to me, young missis."

"But, Cato, I should like to know something too. What is there secret in these instructions of Captain St. Julien?"

"Hegh! Da's jes' like ooman's! He mus' be knowing to ebbry t'ing. Wha' good he guine do you for know? De cappin know, Cato know . . Wha' den? You guine alter wha' de cappin say?"

"No, Cato, but I would like to know what it is."

"You know soon 'rough, when you see what Cato guine done."

And no further answer would the fellow vouchsafe, as he wheeled his horses to the right and drove them down toward the swamp, and sufficiently far into the thicket to conceal the vehicle from any wayfarers along the road.

"Der you is—all safe!" cried the negro, as he held up his horses. "Reckon dem 'ory nebber can see we yer from de

road. Ef he want for fin' we, he mus' put he nose down to de groun' and run' in. An' now, you yerry wha' de cappin bin tell you. Git out ef you wants to, and 'tretch you limb, and pick de yaller flowers ob de forest. Ha! he's a berry 'trange sawt o' pusson, dat cappin; jes' he guine fight wid broadsword and pistol, he tell we 'bout de flowers ob de forest, and whay for look for 'em, and all dem 'ting wid big name. And jes' wid he mout' full ob flowers, he guine cut down de hossman and de nosses, and shoot de people as he run!"

And the ladies descended from the carriage, and began to look about for flowers, when suddenly there was a sharp blare of the bugle, and then a confused sound, a strange hum, as of numerous insects, rising rapidly into the uproar, the clash and clang of a very spirited combat, hand to hand and *a l'outrance*.

St. Julien's broadswords were soon at breakfast, their teeth meeting in the flesh.

He was deliberate—very much so—as a man of action; but he consumed very little time in his deliberations. It was only to possess himself of all the facts in the case, as gatherable from his scouts, that he drew rein for a brief moment in the wood.

The enemy were to be surprised. They were in possession of an old mill-seat, on the Caw-caw. They were scattered along a narrow causeway. They had breakfasted, and whiskey had been their substitute for coffee. They were refreshed, and, something more, exhilarated—never once dreaming of an enemy so near them. On the contrary, under the lead of a notorious Florida outlaw, one Lem Watkins, after a season of foray on the South Edisto and Savannah, they were preparing to unite themselves with the main army, and to share in its expected spoils. Their horses stood ready bitted, saddled and bridled for a start. Some were fastened to branches of trees upon the roadside; others might be seen upon the causeway leading to the mill; Watkins himself, with a group, was taking a stirrup-cup, just above the stream itself, which happened to be quite low and fordable. A dozen of them were in the saddle, when, these details all previously ascertained by the scouts of St. Julien, and his troop having worked their way down under cover of the woods until concealment was no longer possible, he

gave the signal, and his bugle rolled out the sharp blasts which sounded to the charge.

Then rose the wild hurrah, the savage whoop! and the dragoons thundered down upon the enemy. The tories, who were dismounted, rushed for their horses. Those who were mounted dashed forward along the causeway down into the swamp. Watkins dropped his bottle of whiskey into the stream, and scrambled across it to the opposite bank where his horse was fastened. Here he mounted, and wound his bugle, and shouted to his troopers to show front and not be ridden down. They might have done so; since the causeway, for a space, was but of wagon-width, and might have been held against thrice the number of foes, by the half-dozen troopers who would have covered it. On each side the ground was mucky and fenny. But a surprise is apt to prevent all mental calculations.

The tories made two or three shows, wheeling about and displaying a front to their assailants. But the charge was too rapid — too headlong, and so, irresistible. To keep ahead, to dash across the causeway and stream, and find cover in the opposite woods, seemed the common impulse of the fugitives, and a fair proportion of them succeeded in doing so — those who perished along the route under St. Julien's sabres, just offering sufficient impediment to delay the onslaught for the safety of the rest. But once was there anything like a conflict. Three brave fellows planted themselves in the middle of the causeway, emptied their pistols into the faces of half a score of the dragoons, tumbled one of them from his saddle, crossed swords with the rest, and were hurled out of the track, ridden down, tumbled from the causeway, and cut to pieces before they could rise.

Quarter was neither asked nor given. The work with them was short. They had been guilty of the blunder of receiving the charge at a halt, instead of setting their own steeds in motion. The momentum of the shock was irresistible. But they embarrassed the charge, delayed it, and two thirds of their comrades, running pellmell, succeeded in getting over the swamp.

The proportion was too great to be allowed to escape. Our dragoons were just enough heated to make a chase agreeable, and where an enemy might go, a brave foe might surely follow

St. Julien dashed after them.

Watkins made a rally. But the showing was a false one. It was but for a moment. With the near rush of the dragoons, the tories broke incontinently, and made for the open woods the pursuers after them, occasionally smiting as they went, shearing off head or arm of the unhappy fugitive whose hope rested upon the legs of a beast wanting the necessary sinews.

The open woods are reached, but offer no security — nay, afford better chances to the dragoons, who are all well mounted, and on powerful, large animals. It was now that the sword began to glean its victims. Watkins, himself, was closely pursued by St. Julien. A small group, less than a score, held on with him. They were nearing the open road. This tended to lessen their chances of safety.

"Why not surrender and get quarter?" said the lieutenant of Watkins, as they ran side by side.

"Ha! and what the good of that? If not the broadsword, it is the gallows!"

Very true! Every mother's son of them was an outlaw.

Breathless, headlong they rushed out into the open road, and whirled their steeds upward. Not twenty yards behind them swept St. Julien forward with his whole squadron, *minus* two men only and three horses. In another moment, the fugitives are lost — just so soon as the pursuers find themselves on the open track! But, even as Watkins gains the road, he shouts, yells with a sense of relief, gives his steed new spurs — lashes the sides of the beast with repeated rowels — and the others do the same. Headlong the beasts go, over and over, rolling in the sand. St. Julien dashes out upon them, with all his squad ron, ready to reap the field!

He is disappointed of the prey. His uplifted sabre is arrested. He gathers up his steed with a sudden curb that staggers the beast. He prepares to wheel — to fly in turn.

He is in the immediate presence of the whole British army of Rawdon! Watkins, with his beast, has rolled over at the very feet of the British van! His neck is not broken, and he has, this time, escaped the keen edge of the partisan's sabre.

The British drums beat the alarm livelily.

"What is this?" cried Rawdon, galloping to the head of his

column. But nobody could explain. The army was prepared for battle, the artillery unlimbered and hurried up to the front; the wearied regiments, marching in loose order up to this moment, and no small disarray, were made to change front, and prepare for attack. The British general, one of the ablest, by the way, in the service, had no reason to doubt that Greene's whole army was at hand. He knew that he was pursued. He knew that Greene, himself, with a strong force of mounted men, had actually passed him; and he might well suppose that a forced march like his own, by a people accustomed to the climate and so strong in cavalry, had proved them better able to endure so heavy a strain upon their strength and sinews, than his European troops, so many of whom were fresh from Ireland. Besides, the country was one highly favorable for surprises. So dense were the forests, so deep the swamps, so sinuous the routes, that two armies might sometimes pitch their tents within a mile of each other, and, unless provided with excellent scouts, might never suspect their mutual proximity until too late.

Rawdon was feeble in cavalry. He had none in fact; his only body of horse having been cut up completely, at Granby, not a week before, by a detachment from Lee's legion. To supply his deficiency, in this most necessary arm of war, in a plain and sparsely-settled country like Carolina, a body of volunteer gentry, his own staff, the field-officers, and some few loyalists — in all something less than a hundred men — had organized themselves for cavalry service on this march, and with reference to the very sort of danger which now appeared to threaten them. The corps was led by Lord Edward Fitzgerald.

This gallant young nobleman, for whom so melancholy a fate was in reserve, to be developed in future histories, soon led his charge against St. Julien. He had been operating on the flanks and rear — it being supposed that the American army was still behind them.

The troop was not an efficient one. It was badly mounted in the first place; and one half of them carried small-swords. It was motley in equipment, and few of them had enjoyed any advantages of drill or training, in the present form and organ

ization of the troop. Nevertheless, it was still too strong, numbering some ninety men, to suffer St. Julien to risk the issue, in the very face of the British army. To keep up a good front, and claw off quietly from the game, was the policy of St. Julien. But would the enemy suffer this? With their infantry to back them, there was hardly a hope of it. But, as this was all of cavalry that the British army could command, it was no part of their policy that it should venture far from the main body in pursuit. Rawdon was particular in his injunctions to this effect. He knew not but that St. Julien's troop was employed as a decoy. Still, it was needful to brush the assailants from his path; and the dashing young Irishman, who had volunteered to head this command, darted out, at a smart gallop, upon our partisans.

St. Julien readily conceived the British policy, and this necessarily counselled his own. He could not successfully maintain the assault of Fitzgerald, and the latter could not venture to pursue him far. His game lay in the heels of his horses. He wheeled about accordingly, the moment that he made the discovery of his enemy in force, sounded his bugle for the retreat, and sent his men a-head—down the road toward Orangeburg. It was impossible under the press of the enemy to recross the Caw-caw.

Then followed the chase, continued for a mile down the road. St. Julien felt that he could always take the measure of his pursuers' feet. He had very much the best horses. He did not urge his beasts. Looking back, from time to time, he saw that the pursuing force was scattered—the better mounted were considerably a-head of the rest—leaving the party in advance very little more numerous than his own. He kept his troop in hand, ready for the moment.

When Turkey creek was passed, he sounded the rally, wheeled about, gave his steed the goad, and dashed on to the embrace of sabres. His steel crossed with that of Fitzgerald. The shock of the two parties was fierce and the strife sharp. It lasted, however, but a moment. Soon the whole force of the British cavalry pressed up to the *melée*, and the retreat was once more resumed. A few saddles on both sides had been emptied in the brief discussion, and the two captains had pretty well warmed with their gallant passage-at-arms.

Fitzgerald felt that his foe could leave him at any moment, and he taunted him with a fling at his chivalry. St. Julien only smiled as he answered:—

"Another time, my lord. You hold the pledge of Peyre St. Julien that he will not always fly."

"Peyre St. Julien! Ah! ha! That is the gallant of Carrie Sinclair!" And with the recollection, his lordship urged even more keenly the pursuit than before. He now had a personal feeling in the matter.

It was not St. Julien's policy to be driven into Orangeburg, where he might find his hands full, with Stuart's buffs and Coffin's cavalry, fresh from the city. Nor was it his game to venture below that place, with the chance of meeting this force on the road; and, very soon there would be small choice of roads, two only offering, one obliquing in an eastern direction, and running sinuously from the village to the Santee, heading the Four-holes swamp; the other crossing the Caw-caw a mile from the village, being the very route which he had designed to pursue, but from which he had been diverted by the tidings, brought by his scouts, of a large body of mounted men. That body of mounted men too, lay between him and all these points, unless they had changed their ground in the last few hours. But he was necessarily compelled to reason and to act as if they still were in his path. He was thus between two or more enemies. Unless he could strike into the woods, and cut directly across the country, he was in danger of falling, one side or the other, into the meshes of a more powerful foe. The shortest course, and boldest, was still the best.

He must try and cripple his immediate pursuer, and so disable him, as to be able to take the woods without risking pursuit from this one source of annoyance.

Done—attempted rather—almost as soon as resolved upon.

Again, the eagerness of the pursuit had divided the force of the pursuers.

St. Julien timed his performances, with a due regard to this circumstance. Again, at a given signal, he wheeled about, brought his troop to the charge, and spurred forward, *a bride abattue*, and with such a shout from the lungs of all, as betrayed the resolution for a most desperate trial of strength.

The shock was beautifully given, and manfully borne. But Fitzgerald himself went down before it, his horse reeling, and finally rolling over him. The clash and clatter of the sabre followed, sounds like the tinkering of a thousand kettles, and ugly cuts were given and taken, and more than one saddle emptied. The foremost squad of Fitzgerald—he himself—was nearly lost, when his rear came up in separate bodies each producing its effect upon the field. The young Irish lord, bruised only, recovered his legs and saddle. A few more mounted men galloped up from Rawdon's army; others were beginning to appear; the enemy was increasing, and St. Julien was forced once more to show his back to the pursuers.

They pressed him closely. His troop was much more jaded than the enemy. His several charges, upon the tories first, and subsequently upon the force of Fitzgerald, began to tell upon his horses, while his pursuers, on the other hand, their movements timed to those of a fagged and exhausted infantry, were comparatively fresh.

The flight began to falter; the chase increased in earnestness. The parties were now but a mile from Orangeburg, and again they mingled in pell-mell conflict.

It was now forced upon the partisans against their desires. The game became serious. St. Julien was hardly pressed, and several of his men were down. The whole of the mounted force of the British, numbering ninety men or more, had reached the field of strife, and, for half-a-mile, along the main road, the conflict was going on among the separated groups.

"Yield, Captain St. Julien, and have good terms," cried Fitzgerald approaching him.

"It will be time enough for that hereafter," was the reply of St. Julien. The swords of the two again crossed. It was quick work. Both were good swordsmen; both good riders; both of similar build, and probably the same degree of strength.

One, two, three!—

Cut!—point!—

How beautifully the sabres flashed, clashed, clove together and recoiled.

But, suddenly, the champions were dashed asunder. Wave after wave rolled in between them. The stunning blare from

twenty bugles—the stunning shouts from five hundred great stentorian throats—startled all the echoes of Caw-caw! Fitzgerald, he knew not how, found himself suddenly in full flight, followed close by all his troopers;—his fine, painted volunteer cavalry—his handsome painted knights—with scarlet coats, flaring feathers, and any quantity of gold lace and crimson sashes, were driving wildly a-head *sauve qui peut*, sounding in the ear of every instinct.

Fitzgerald was a little stunned—had some curious sensations about the head and ears—was about to ask of a dozen, as they hurried up, after the secret of this new uproar—when he began to distinguish the meaning of the shouts which followed him.

"Marion's men! Marion's men! Hurrah for the old swamp-fox!"

It was Marion, indeed, just coming up from his dash at Stewart's convoy. He brought with him four hundred mounted men. Hotly was the chase pressed upon the young Irish gallant. Trooper after trooper of his handsome little squadron was picked up or cut down as they rode and ran! It was with the cheer of half-drowning men that the fugitives hailed the sight of Rawdon's red-coats, coming on at a trot, and opening to receive and shelter them, with presented bayonets toward their foes.

The musketry now began to speak from the advancing columns, and the troopers of the swamp-fox drew in their bridles, and yielded slowly and sullenly, before the advancing infantry of the British.

CHAPTER XLII.

PROGRESS OF THE ARMIES.

THE British army was able to repel the mounted men of Marion—to compel them to maintain a respectful distance—but not to drive them off. It was with a sore and angry spirit that Lord Rawdon beheld the squadron of the partisans hovering on front and flank, eagerly watching for the opportunity to swoop down and cut off stragglers, and carry off baggage-wagons. And he could do nothing, wanting cavalry. His flanks, and front, and rear, were closely watched by his musketry, and at a measured pace, drooping forward, in depression and exhaustion, he moved on in order of battle, momently expecting its shock from the army of Greene.

"Heavens!" said Marion to his officers, as he watched the progress of the foe with the eager appetite of the hawk. "If our infantry were but present! How we should cut them up. They are ready to drop with exhaustion. It is our presence only that keeps them up."

Such was the case! Never was army so broken in spirit, by the terribly exhausting effects of a forced march in midsummer, and by the dispiriting and demoralizing effect of such a situation, lacking in the one arm, that of cavalry, which alone, against such a force as that of Marion, could protect them from insult.

And, staggering forward, the British army slowly worked along, as compact in mass as it could be made, with bristles every side presented, not daring to pause, not daring to hurry, with those keen sabres, and eager horsemen skirting and sweeping all about them, watchful of the opportunity to sweep and strike!

But, suddenly, they send up a cheer. Bugles were heard in front, the drums were rolling of approaching forces from below

Stewart had marched from Orangeburg with his regiment of buffs and the cavalry of Coffin, for the relief of his superior. As the two bodies drew near to a junction, the bugles of Marion sounded, and his mounted men seemed to melt away in the woods between them, passing out of sight, and upward, to the road crossing the Caw-caw, the one which St. Julien was compelled to avoid, in consequence of the report of his scouts. Coffin's cavalry made a demonstration upon the rear of our partisans, seconded by the squad of Fitzgerald, but they were roughly handled in the brief collision, and fell back upon their columns of infantry.

Marion drew rein just above the crossing of the Caw-caw. He could dispute this passage. But the British were in no condition to pursue. No sooner had the junction of the two commands been effected, than they pressed on for Orangeburg, in no temper for conflict; and as soon as they had gone into quarters, the scouts of Marion were all about the place. Their allies within it were not idle; and the parties, singly, stole in and out during the day and night, under cover of the swamps of Edisto.

That very day Marion sent a despatch to Greene, of which we need quote but a single sentence:—

"They are neither able to fight nor fly. They are in a state of utter exhaustion, too fatigued to move. The report is that three regiments were going to lay down their arms to-day, and they will certainly do so, if required again to march. They have no notion that any force is near them except mine. Let the army come on before they can recover. We have them in a trap. One vigorous effort may close the war. Their Irish troops need but few arguments to turn their bayonets against their masters."

And Greene eagerly prepared to adopt this counsel, issuing his orders instantly for the concentration of all his forces about Orangeburg, except that single command under Pickens, which was following closely upon the footsteps of Cruger and his loyalists, harassing them, whenever possible, on their retreat.

But we are not to suppose that St. Julien suffered all these proceedings of the army to continue, without giving any heed to the condition of the travelling party whom he had secreted

in the woods. While the actual pressure continued of the fight with the cavalry of Fitzgerald, and subsequently, while Marion hovered about the British army, and up to the moment when its junction with Stewart forbade any further hope of a successful demonstration upon it, there was no escape for the little command which St. Julien led. There had been, in fact, no time for any explanation with his superior, until the moment when, crossing the Caw-caw, they had driven back the cavalry of Coffin. Then it was that St. Julien had an opportunity of communicating with Sinclair, to whom he revealed the particulars of his progress. Meanwhile hours had passed. The day was now late in the afternoon.

"Good heavens, Peyre, what a tedious time they must have had of it, and where shall we be able to get them to, to-night?"

"Nay, let that be the after-thought. We must be content to recover them first and relieve their anxiety. Get leave for me at once, unless you desire to go yourself."

"We shall both go. I will see the general for a moment."

And to Marion he went. The latter did not hear him out.

"To be sure, Sinclair; relieve the ladies as soon as possible. What a time they have had of it. But, bring them along with you. They can find the way up to Herrisperger's to-night, and to-morrow you can send them directly across the country to the Congaree. Do not delay, remember. We can not spare you —can spare nobody now for any length of time. To-morrow we may have work. Remember, the wishes of the ladies must give way to our necessities. They must come with you. I can not spare you to go with them. Take St. Julien's troop. They will suffice."

And Sinclair, with St. Julien, started off at a smart canter, without heeding the laggard, limping movement of their steeds. They talked as they rode, compared notes, reported mutual progress, and without loss of time, made their calculations and arrangements for the future. It was arranged that Mrs. Travis and Bertha would need no escort the next day, taking the upper route to the Congaree, in a progress over a region which the patriots almost wholly covered, now that Rawdon's force was withdrawn from it. They were, at all events, compelled to see that no escort from the army could now be accorded to their

wishes. Of course, there was something said of Mr. Travis and Henry, and some speculations as to the mode of seeking and recovering them; but this was necessarily a matter of more remote consideration. For the ladies now.

And so scheming and arranging, they at length reached the spot where the carriage had sought harborage, and where Bertha had been counselled how, and with what ingredients, to fashion her bouquet.

"This is the place. Here they put in, you see," said St. Julien, and he led the way.

The carriage-wheels were followed deep into the woods, as deeply as it could go. Here they came to a halt. Their visages grew blank. St. Julien picked up a bouquet of wild flowers, very rich, fashioned very much after his directions. Sinclair found a handkerchief, with Bertha's initials in the corner. Cato's hat was also upon the ground. But carriage, ladies, Cato—all were gone!

"Good heavens, Peyre! what can this mean? What has become of them?"

"Let us look about, Willie."

Trembling like a leaf in the winds of autumn, with the agitating apprehensions of his soul, Willie Sinclair leaped from his steed, and examined the ground more closely. So did St. Julien. The troopers, meanwhile, coursed about in search also. At length, sickening as he spoke, Sinclair stooping, sank upon his knees, and cried out, in voice at once hoarse and feeble:—

"Peyre! Peyre! Is it blood?"

He pointed as he spoke to a dark crimson puddle at his feet.

"It *is* blood!" answered St. Julien in husky tones, and he shuddered with terrible fancies as he spoke.

"Oh, God! be merciful!" murmured the strong man, as he gazed into the puddle, as if seeking to discover, from its quality, from whose heart it had issued. There were drops of the same dark hue scattered freely about. All was clotted, hard, and drying rapidly.

"Get up, Willie! Arouse you! We must try and find the track of the carriage, and follow it. They are gone from hence."

"Oh! Peyre! Peyre! Why did you leave them for a moment?"

'Do not reproach me, Willie; let us be men now. Let us search. Let us follow!"

For a few moments, Sinclair gave full way to his grief, in a wild burst of reproach and anguish.

"You were my friend, Peyre—my more than brother. I trusted you with the woman whom I had planted in my heart, and you have left her to be murdered."

"I will recover her, Willie Sinclair, or perish myself. She is not murdered! Who would murder her? What motive?"

"The blood! the blood!" shrieked, rather than spoke, the strong but suffering man.

"It is *not* hers! My life on it, it is not hers!" was the stern and confident reply of St. Julien. "But we must waste no time—lose no opportunity in the indulgence of our weakness. Let us look farther. Let us see if we can not track the carriage."

Sinclair aroused himself with a prodigious effort.

They searched. They found the place where the vehicle had been wheeled about—had been drawn into the road again, some fifty yards from where it had entered—traced its track into the old furrows of the road, and there it merged in with others so as to become indistinguishable. It had evidently pursued, for awhile, a due northerly direction.

To dash ahead, to review the crossing at the old mill-seat where St. Julien had surprised the tories under Watkins, to stretch on a few miles farther to another crossing, at another abandoned mill-seat, was the work of comparatively little time. Here they fancied they again found traces of the carriage-wheels. They were mistaken; but of this hereafter.

"They have crossed here into the Granby road," said St. Julien.

"It is more than probable. Let us push after them," said Sinclair; we can surely overtake them. In that heavy carriage they can move but slowly."

"Willie, let me prosecute the search. Give me but ten men, and do you hurry back to camp, and obtain my excuse from Marion."

"And why should *you* pursue the search and not me? What is Bertha Travis to you? No! Peyre; do *you* go back to the general, and state the facts. Leave *me* the ten men."

"But, Willie, remember your responsibility. *You* command a battalion. *I* can be better spared."

"Do as I tell you, Peyre!"

"Willie, we are on the eve of a battle! *You* must not be absent. You heard what the general said."

"You talk as if I should be suspected of skulking from battle."

"I talk as I should to my brother."

"What! you would peril your reputation for mine! Is that it? Do I not know, that your absence at such a moment is as fearful a trial for you as for me, Peyre? No! no! my brother! The discredit is equal with both of us, if any there be, and mine is the chief stake in this pursuit—mine is the loss and danger which alone could justify absence, at such a time, from the army. Go you back. Tell the general the simple truth. You shall peril nothing of reputation for me, Peyre, and, mortifying as it will be to me to be absent, yet I dare not, even at the peril of my reputation, consent that Bertha Travis should be exposed to danger and insult, when a bold effort of mine might save her."

"Let *me* seek and save her, dear Willie; it is almost a right. It was I that lost her."

"No, Peyre! you must return. I was unjust to you. You could not have done otherwise than you did. Back with you, with all speed, and tell the whole affair to Marion. He will do me justice. I will push the pursuit to-night—to-morrow I will be back to camp by midnight. In that time, should I fail to overtake her, I shall know that I have taken the wrong track. Here, it seems to be sufficiently marked to warrant my taking it. I will do all that I can that I may not suffer future self-reproach for supineness and timidity now."

We shall understand the generous impulses of these young men, when we remember how much a military reputation depends upon the prompt recognition of the claims of duty, over all other considerations, no matter of what sort, when armies are about to be pitched for battle. Sinclair was the military superior of

St. Julien. He was the elder also. His was the loss in the abduction of Bertha. All things, all arguments concurred in compelling the submission of the subordinate. But it was with great reluctance that he tore himself away, leaving to Willie Sinclair the task of pursuing the farther search, with the ten troopers, after his mistress and her mother.

And the two rode different ways.

"Blood! blood! Oh! God! if it should be hers!"

And murmuring thus over as he went, Willie Sinclair dashed away on the supposed tracks of the fugitives, crossed the Caw-caw at the old mill-seat, and coursed up the road which led to Granby.

And as St. Julien rode back to camp, his subject of musing was that speaking, yet unintelligible blood, proof also — proof of crime and violence and suffering! but whose? — proof of suffering — but not of the victim! That terrible doubt. The agony of it to both.

"It is not *hers! not* hers! No! no! of that I am sure. Who would stab or murder that young creature? or her mother? Why! with what purpose? To what end? No! If anybody, it is poor old Cato that has been slain! The good old fellow has undertaken to defend his mistress, and has been butchered.

"But who are the murderers? Where could they spring from?"

St. Julien was soon bewildered in the mazes of his own conjecture. The natural suggestion was that of the interposition of some strolling body of tories, small squads of whom were everywhere scattered about the country, engaged in all outlawed practices, and bent wholly on private revenge, and indiscriminate plunder. The thought that Bertha Travis and her mother, had fallen into such hands, though not calculated to produce any serious apprehensions for their lives — for women are not usually victims to violence in the south — was yet very far from a grateful or assuring one. There were crimes to which even that of murder might wear a comparatively innocent complexion.

But we need not trouble ourselves with the musings of St. Julien. He reached Marion after dark, and made his report.

The swamp-fox was one of the most indulgent of commanders in the case of such of his officers as he knew to be faithful and honorable. In respect to Sinclair and St. Julien, he was very well assured that neither of them had the slightest disposition to skulk from duty. The case of Sinclair he felt to be one to justify a more decided departure from orders than the one for which St. Julien apologized. Marion was not only no Martinet, but he was perhaps a little disposed to regard the regular service as quite too exacting, and as not sufficiently recognising the claims of humanity. But for the crisis in army affairs, which was generally supposed to be pending—but that he hoped to see the main army brought into the field in twenty-four hours, and Rawdon forced to the final arbitrament of the sword in that space of time—he would have suffered St. Julien to depart, with all his command, in support of his friend. It was with a feeling of great uneasiness that he resolved not to do so; and with some misgivings, when he threw himself down beneath his tree that night, whether he had not been a little too exacting, in not tendering him the leave of absence, with his troop, which might better enable Sinclair to recover his mistress.

Meanwhile, our major of dragoons crossed the Caw-caw and pressed northward. He rode till night, sometimes fancying that he had recovered the tracks of the carriage, but much wondering at its rapid progress. He camped at night in a thicket near the trail, which he could no longer pursue in the darkness, and resumed the chase with the dawn. He rode half the day, but rode in vain. He had watched the road narrowly; looked heedfully at every cross-road and turn-out; searched or inquired at every house or hovel; saw nothing; heard nothing; and, at the close of another day, was compelled to feel that he had lost all traces of the fugitives.

Marion, meanwhile, with his brigade of mounted men, had recrossed the Caw-caw, and taken post on the north side of the creek which crosses the old Orangeburg road to Granby, four miles above the village. Here he awaited the approach of Greene, maintaining, all the while, a vigilant watch upon his enemy in Orangeburg. His cavalry was in such strength, compared to that of Rawdon, that his parties approached the

village, and swept audaciously around it without challenge or pursuit.

On the 10th of July, Greene had collected together most of his detachments, and, reinforced by Sumter with his brigade, and some small parties of militia, he marched down to give his enemy battle. After he had joined Marion, it was found that the whole American army numbered a little over two thousand men; but of these only eight hundred were infantry. The force of Rawdon, including Stewart's command, was about sixteen hundred disciplined men, and perhaps two hundred supernumeraries upon whom no reliance could be placed. With so small a force of infantry, in proportion to his cavalry, Greene could not have encountered Rawdon in a pitched battle, unless with some peculiar advantage of position; while Rawdon, having no cavalry, could venture upon no enterprises which might remove him from his covered position. In artillery the two armies were nearly equal.

At the point where Marion (and afterward Greene) took post, only four miles from Rawdon's garrison, the fact of doing so was an invitation to battle. To take ground within eight or ten miles of an enemy's position is a military challenge. But Rawdon surveyed his antagonist from his sheltered places, with a grim sort of contempt, taking no notice apparently of the indignity offered him. Nothing would have better pleased this gentleman than to march out, as he had done at Camden, and give his ancient opponent battle. But he had too much at stake to peril anything for the present, and he preferred waiting until the arrival of Cruger from Ninety-Six should give him such a preponderating force as would make the issue almost certain to be successful. His hope was that Greene, pleased with the mortifying position in which his presence placed the British army, would linger in the neighborhood sufficiently long to enable him to realize the junction with Cruger. He took no occasion therefore to show disquiet, or to beat up the American quarters. He made no sorties; he attempted no negotiations. Still he was uneasy. The Americans had cut off his resources. He was for the time isolated. The parties of Marion swept round him hourly, and the only outlet left him was by the bridge over the Edisto and into the forks between the two

branches of that stream, which his batteries covered. And this was a region which was now almost reduced to barrenness.

Greene dreaded the appearance of Cruger quite as greatly as Rawdon desired it. He knew that the junction of the two would increase the force of Rawdon to nearly or quite three thousand men, and those whom Cruger brought with him were veterans, and not, like the new Irish regiments of Rawdon, of uncertain fidelity. He determined, therefore, if possible, to anticipate the approach of Cruger, by forcing Rawdon to battle.

We have already described the position of Orangeburg, but it may be necessary in this place, to state that, lying on the east bank of the North Edisto, the river so winds about it as to cover one half of its circumference. To the north and south are swamps and ravines, which not only forbid the free use of cavalry—in which so much of Greene's strength consisted—but these swamps and ravines make so near an approach to each other, as to leave, on the east side, but a narrow isthmus, uneven and broken, upon which an assailant could operate. The jail, a strong brick building of two stories, was a good substitute for a redoubt, and this building with others contiguous, commanded the approach. All of these Rawdon occupied. The crown of the hill, on which this building stood, was sufficiently spacious for the formation and manœuvres of the whole British army. To these chief defences, when you add the houses and fences of the town, it will be seen that, against a force consisting chiefly of mounted militia, the place was one of considerable strength.

Greene's *reconnoissances*, which put him in possession of these facts, compelled him to hesitate in his first resolution of forcing the British general to battle. A conference with his officers—not exactly a council of war—followed, which resulted, as usual in such cases, in the adoption of the safer policy; we are not prepared to say the *wiser* one. The Americans, for the moment, were in high spirits, the British depressed by fatigue, and vexed with discontent. The impediments of the ground were not such as, in the *present* state of military science, would be called strong. The houses occupied by Rawdon, with the exception of the jail, were wood. The eminence they occupied was exceedingly slight and of gradual rise. The ap-

proaches might be made on several quarters, and artillery might have been successfully employed upon the jail.

No doubt the true reason why the assault was not made, is to be found in the American want of infantry and the proper arms and implements. With a thousand bayonets, supported by artillery, and accompanied by a cloud of riflemen, there is no question that the natural defences of the place would have been wholly disregarded and easily overcome. Even with the force he had, were they well supplied with rations, Greene might have made a successful demonstration. But a few ounces of rice, and two ounces of lean beef, *per diem*, to a man who is expected to charge up a rising ground in the face of a well-appointed garrison, offer but small incentives to valiant enterprise.

Contenting himself with marching before, and in sight of Rawdon's position, with his whole army, on the 12th, Greene then drew off his forces. He had put a military insult upon his enemy, and there is always some satisfaction in that achievement, to both regulars and militia. He drew back to his camp that night, and before morning was advised by his scouting parties of the progress downward of Cruger's division. In another day he might be expected to arrive. It became necessary to prepare for early removal, since there could be no question but that Rawdon, as soon as the junction could be made with Cruger, would march out, and with a force with which the Americans could hardly hope to contend. We may mention, in addition, that Greene's marches had not been made without considerable exhaustion to his own troops. His infantry needed rest. It was rapidly succumbing to fatigue, the want of proper food and the terrible severity of the climate. But a good supper on the Edisto was necessary to fit them for further fatigues, and for this the camp-kettles were put in requisition at a very early hour. What sort of supper was to be had, and where it was to come from, were questions that exercised the conjectural ingenuity of all parties to a far greater extent than did the future prospects and possibilities of the war!

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE FROG CONCERT AND CAMPAIGN.

The army of Greene were taking rest for the first time for several days, at the close of that which witnessed their insulting demonstrations before the garrison of Orangeburg. We have seen that their camp lay only four miles from that village:—a mellow sunset overspread the scene, and gentle breezes from the west cooled off sweetly the heat of a day, the ardency of which had severely tried tried all parties. The utmost languor for a while pervaded the encampment. The troops lay about upon the grass, under the trees, with half-shut eyes, enjoying that dreamy sensation which supervenes after fatigue, and before recuperation—mind and body in concert, as it were, for mutual restoration. But few of the groups visible in our foreground, were capable of exertion, and but few, indeed, of those whom we do not see, were any more equal to it than those immediately before our eyes. Here and there, some important adjutant, ensign, or corporal, might be found, restlessly employed, giving orders about the use of moonshine. Troopers who had thrown their chief burdens on the loins of their horses, were, perhaps, the most lively; and groups of these were to be seen, busy in consuming the last drops of sunshine and Jamaica at command, while flirting the cards at "old sledge" from well-thumbed and greasy packs of "pictures," pitching quoits, or grooming horses. We confess that Marion's men were the chief sinners after this fashion; his boys of Santee, Pedee, Waccamaw, and the parish country generally, having a sort of natural calling for the fine arts, were busy with cards and coppers at every rest. Cards and dice constituted so many fine arts in their hands. It was the boast of some of them that they could extract all sorts of music, fun, and philosophy, from the four aces.

To this general rest and languor of the army, there were, however, some striking exceptions. The command of Marion stretched toward the Caw-caw. In the woods of this region, an hour before sunset, there might be seen a squad of twenty troopers, dark, bronzed, half-naked young savages, following, with some interest, the speech and movements of a large, broad-shouldered, and great-bellied personage, wearing the uniform—somewhat doubtful, indeed, because of rents, stains, and deficiencies—of a captain of dragoons. He was on foot, and by no means active of movement, though taking his steps with the confidence of a war-horse, and the solid firmness of an elephant. He was a fine-looking fellow, in spite of the too great obtrusion upon the sight of his abdominal territory, a region which he, nevertheless, endeavored to circumscribe within reasonable bounds by a girthing of leather, only half covered with a crimson sash, which no doubt had the desired effect in some degree, though at some sacrifice of the wearer's comforts His face was full almost as the moon at full, of a ruddy brown, his head massive, chin large and prominent eyes, bright but small, and mouth eager with animation. His nose was decidedly intellectual. At his elbow stood a negro, jacket off, and arms akimbo, who followed the motions of his superior with a mixed air of deference and assurance. Around these two the troopers were gathered. Before the group, slaughtered and skinned, hanging from a tree, was one of the lean beeves of the country—a poor skinny beast, weighing some two hundred pounds. gross, bone, meat, skin, offal! Near at hand stood a small, rickety, covered wagon, the contents of which we may conjecture. It was one of Marion's recent captures from the convoy of Stewart; and contained, no doubt, some resources, the value of which may be guessed from the mysterious looks which were, every now and then, cast upon it by passing groups of thirsty dragoons, the very glances of whom are apt to burst locks, and consume stores.

Our captain was busy with the commissariat of the brigade—not as the head of it, by no means, but as premier—head-counseller, and legal and moral adviser.

"I tell you, Fickling, it will never do. Tell me there were no better beeves to be had! You have just taken what they

please to give you. You are too modest. It is the infirmity of your family, whenever the interest is not absolutely and directly your own. We do this business of foraging for all the army, yet it seems that the meanest share is always to fall to us. Tell me nothing of Colonel Lee. He has an independent legion; let him pick up his own beeves. As for the field-officers, I do not see that their official position confers upon them any right to better tastes and appetites than a poor captain of partisan cavalry. I thank my stars that I have tastes which are as well cultivated as any brigadier or colonel in the army. And shall my tastes be defrauded, because these epauletted buffaloes are greedy, and you are mealy-mouthed? Why the devil don't you assert yourself, man, and assist us, as you should, when the distribution of the beef takes place? You are a fool, Fickling, for your submission! Colonel Lee's man steps before you, and says, 'Colonel Lee;' and Colonel Washington's man starts up, and says, 'Colonel Washington'—and these, and a score of others, even while they speak, clap hands on the best pieces, and choose the fattest flanks; and when all are served, you steal up, with finger in your mouth, and murmur, 'Is anything left for General Marion?' Is that the way to do business? I tell you, 'No, sir!' Your true way is to take the best that offers—lay bold hands on it—nay, thrust it through with your naked sabre, and say, 'Marion's brand!' Do the thing as you should, with the proper look and manner, and not a rapscallion in the army, representing no matter what division, dare lay hands on it after that! If they do, let me be at your elbow next time, with two or three fellows of my choosing!"

"But, Captain Porgy—"

"But me no buts, Mr. Fickling. I'll have you out of your office, if you do not but against this sort of distribution. You are to provide us; and, if you do not comprehend that our soldiers are just as deserving of good food as any continentals in the service, you are not fit for our service, and I'll have you out of it. General Marion himself submits quite too much to this sort of treatment. If there is a fine horse in the brigade, it is immediately wanted for some one of Lee's dragoons—some d—d henchman or bugleman—and off the colonel goes to Greene and tells him that his legion wants horses, and that

Marion has enough and to spare, and we are called upon to dismount, and provide other people. Yet are we kept day and night on the trot—off to-day for the Pon-pon and Savannah, to-morrow for the Pedee—now running down tories, now cattle: seeking information, scouting, spying, called out at all hours; and how is this to be done, if we are to give up our horses. The brigade has covered all this low country, from the Pedee to the Savannah, for three years and more, and the best that is got in the forays that we alone make, are served out to these hungry feeders. I won't submit to it. They shall neither have my horses nor my cattle; and if you take any more such beef as this, Fickling, when better is to be had, we'll turn you, neck and heels, out of your department."

"But, Captain Porgy—"

"See to it!"

"But—"

"See to it! That's all! I say no more—to you!—Tom!"

"Sah!"

"Get our share of that carrion! See what you can do with it. We must have soup, I suppose. Make a pilaw. We have plenty of pepper now. You can hardly get a decent steak from the beast. But do what you can. I must see after something more. We are to have company to-night. I have asked the great men, the big-wigs, the governor, Generals Marion and Sumter, the colonels of the brigade, Maham, Singleton, and a few others. Have everything ready by ten o'clock. Did you succeed in getting any melons?"

"I empty one patch, maussa."

"Whose?"

"I dunn know quite 'zackly, but he's a fiel' jes' yer on de back ob de village. De melons is quite 'spectable."

"Ripe?"

"As de sunshine kin make 'em."

"Good! Do as much stealing in an honest way as you can! D—n the patriotism that can't eat stolen fruits!"

"Wha' else you guine hab, maussa."

"Who knows what I can get? I must look. There ought to be frogs here in abundance, and of good size. Not such as we can find in a rice reserve, Tom, but passable in war-time, and

delicate enough for hot weather. I shall look out for a young alligator or two."

"Dat'll do! Gi' me two young alligator tail, and de frog, and I gi' you fus' rate tuttle soup and ball, and steak."

"Must have a ragout, Tom. Have you seen no pigs about, Tom!"

"Nebber yer de fus' squeak, maussa."

"Well"—with a grunt—"we must do as we can. Come, boys, are you ready?"

"Ay, ay, captain!" from a score of voices; and a dozen active young fellows presented themselves, armed with wooden spears and knives.

"Where's George Dennison?"

A voice answered from the foot of a tree.

"Come along, George; don't be lazy. What you shall see this evening will enable you to beat Homer in a new epic, in which cranes and frogs shall figure to posterity."

And, following the corpulent captain, the whole party pushed down to the swamp.

"There's a battalion for you, George Dennison. Not a rascal under six feet—half a dozen nearer seven. I chose them specially for the expedition. They are our cranes, and are all eager for the war."

"And the frogs are sounding for the conflict. Hear their tongues, already. The concert for the evening is begun. Hear the chirruping overture:—

> "'Fry bacon—tea-table!
> Coyong! coyong! coyong!
> Supper on table—supper on table,
> Eat if you're able!
> Blood an' 'ounds—blood an' 'ounds.'

"By the way, captain, a frog concert, would not be a bad speculation in the great cities of Europe. How a score or two of musical fellows, who had once or twice slept in our swamps, or lingered after sunset along our rice-fields, would make capital out of it! And such a sensation. What a hurly-burly, subdued to order, they could make of it."

"No doubt! The notes and tones, across [illegible] *gamut!* It is a rare original music. But, [illegible]

in making the music tributary to satire. The frogs should furnish a running commentary on the follies and vices of society, as in Aristophanes, only adapted to our times. It would task art admirably to work out of it an opera—the Loves of the Frogs! Little Squeaka, the dreaming sentimental damsel, just emerging into society—coming out; in her train some half a dozen Jockos—minnows of fashion, that sing in a love-lisp always—Therubina! ah! Therubina! Oh the rich fun of such a farcical! Of what a delightful variety would the affair admit! The lover, the villain, the priest, the mother—all the usual varieties, not forgetting Arlecchino. Of course, the frogs are not less fortunate than their betters. They have a Jack Pudding among them. The squirrels have I know."

"Don't forget the duenna! Hear her falsetto, squeaking through a score of crevices in her broken teeth:—

"'On your knees, O,
Not a sneeze, O,
Don't you hear your mother coming!'
'To be kissed, O,
By the priest, O,
Is the saintliest sort of mumming'

"'O, alack, O,
Such a smack, O,
Makes the very echoes jealous;'
'But it proves, O,
Holy loves, O,
Most particularly zealous.'

"'Hark that drumming!'
'Mother coming!'
'And that pother!'
'Tis your father!'
'Awful sounds, O!'
'Blood and 'ounds, O!'—

"In full fresco swells the chorus,
From the motley group before us;
Sighing, swelling,
Barking, belling—
Such a moaning, such intoning,
So much groaning, honing, droning,
Calling, falling, bawling, drawling,
Speaking, shrieking, squeezing, squeaking,

"All subsiding to a quiver,
And a shiver,
Only to ascend, in thunder,
Rolling up and roaring under—
Blood and 'ounds, O! blood and 'ounds, O!
Awful sounds, breaking bounds,
Setting all the woods a-shaking,
Setting all the bog a-quaking,
All the swampy empire waking,
With the eternal blood and 'ounds, O

"Rending, raging,
Battle waging,
'Yond all musical assuaging—
O'er all mortal sounds uproarious,
O'er all mortal sense victorious,
Like the diapason glorious,—
That through pipes and stops,
Shrieks, and bounds, and hops,
Foams, and frisks, and frolics,
Rolls and rages, rocks and rollicks,
Feeding every mortal stopper, ah!
Of the grand Italian opera!"

Thus it was that the rustic poet of the partisans, gave forth extempore an embodiment of the music of the frogpondians.

"Hurrah!" cried Porgy, "hurrah, Geordie—why, man, you are native, to frog manor born, with all the pipes and bellows of the swamp in your own wind-bags; or to requite you in your own coin:—

"Worthy venison,
Geordie Dennison,
You will soon require a stopper, O,
Scaring off with greater clamor,
Every leap-frog from his amour,
Turning every mother's son of 'em
Making fun of 'em,—
To a hopper off, from a hopper, O!"

And thus doggrelizing as they went, the two led their laughing cohort down into the swamp.

The Caw-caw was in full concert. Bull and bell, squeak and shriek, moan and groan. All the artistes were in exercise, engaged, no doubt, in some rehearsal, preparatory to some great ceremonial—the bridal, possibly, of the young princess of the pondians.

Porgy and his corps, with their pointed spears of wood, wooden forks, baskets, and knives, stole down into the lagunes. What a picture for the stage! What an action for the burlesque drama! But the matter was a serious one enough for one of the parties. Long will the frogs of that ilk remember with wailing the raid of the cranes of that day. Could you have seen those long, gaunt backwoodsmen, each with shaft, prong, or trident, striding hither and thither in the bog and lake, striding right and left, poised above their great-eyed enemies, and plunging forward to grapple the wounded and squalling victim before he should sheer off, or, as George Dennison said afterward, describing the affair in sonorous heroics:—

"Could you have seen that theatre of frogs,
As each in due delight and bog immersed,
Sprawled out, at length, in slime and sandy bed;
Great legs of green or brown outstretching wide;
Great arms thrown out as if embracing heaven;
With eyes dilating, big as Bullace grapes,
Upturned, and gloating as with rapturous rage;
Great flattened jaws, that, ever and anon,
Distending with voluminous harmonies,
Sent forth their correspondences of sound,
In due obedience to the choragus,
Who still, at proper intervals, pour'd out
The grand refrain — sonorous, swelling still,
Till, at the last, the apex diapason
Was caught, was won, in glorious 'Blood and 'ounds!'"

It was a war of shallow waters. Habitual croakers are only justified when they perish. They have nothing to complain of. They always seem to anticipate their fate, and this seems to prove it only just execution after judgment — which, of course, is legal and becoming. Our partisans had grown expert in this sort of warfare. The Caw-caw swamp was a region in which the frogs held populous communities and cities, and — you know the proverb — "Thick grass is easier cut than thin." It was a massacre! Every spearman could count his score or two of slain, and, really, a very pretty spectacle they made when, emerging from the swamp, each carried his victims aloft, transfixed upon a sharp and slender rod, run through at the neck, eyes wider than ever, and legs and arms spread about in all

direction. Nor was this all. No less than three young alligators and three times as many terrapins were surprised and captured, almost without a struggle, and borne off in triumph to the camp! The wailing in the Caw-caw that night was not greatly lessened by the loss of so many sonorous voices, since we may reasonably suppose that maternal suffering sent up such extra clamors for the absence of precious young ones, as more than atoned for the diminished forces of the community.

"On your lives, boys, not a word of what we have been doing," said Captain Porgy. They all swore to keep faith.

"There are thousands of clever people in the world," he added, "who require to be surprised into happiness. Some of my guests, to-night, are probably of this description. I shall teach them a new pleasure—nay, a new moral in a new pleasure—teach them how absurd it is to despise any of the gifts of Providence."

And, following out this policy, it was with great secrecy that the spoils of the frog campaign were conveyed to his quarters, and delivered over to the custody of Tom, his cook. Tom, we may add, like every sensible cook, made a sufficient mystery of his art to keep prying curiosity away from the kitchen whenever he was engaged in any of his culinary combinations. Let us leave these for other parties, and for proceedings of more imposing consequence if less attractive performance. We shall seek to be present when supper is on the table.

CHAPTER XLIV.

PLAN FOR THE CAMPAIGN OF THE DOG-DAYS.

WHILE our cranes were busied in the assault upon the green jackets of the pond, the American general had assembled about him, in the woods in the rear of his encampment, all the leading persons of his army. Sentinels were duly stationed around for the keeping off of intruders. The assembly was a somewhat primitive one in the fashion of its grouping, if not its materials The greensward offered the only seats. The green boughs of oak and pine furnished the only roofing. A few logs afforded places for persons of distinction; but the greater number were fain to make themselves level with the green bosom of their mother earth—at this season covered with a plentiful clothing of verdure; crab-grass and crowfoot, to say nothing of dock, fern, and a pretty variety of wild flowers. General Greene received the several persons as they presented themselves. He was a person of imposing size and figure—too portly for the ethereal, but of goodly make for a major-general of provincials—of fine, commanding form—of mild, intelligent countenance, which a slight obliquity in one of his eyes did not impair: of simple manners, easy and not ungraceful carriage. Greene was a man of good military abilities;—we are not prepared to call them extraordinary;—of cool, sedate mind, and ready resource; not very daring; not brilliant of conception; too Fabian of policy for the proper use of cavalry—which implies the necessity of daring; and perhaps a little wanting in that promptness which secures and fixes victory at the moment of crisis, when she trembles from side to side, uncertain where to settle. In the sort of warfare which he was called upon to conduct, during the war of the Revolution, in the South, he was particularly useful, perhaps, because of his caution—in not perilling the

cause upon any single action, where defeat might be certain ruin, and in tempering a very sanguine and impetuous people. He was cautious, like Washington; but in greater degree than Washington; and did not aim at any brilliant performances. In a service so inexperienced as that of the American, during the Revolution, and with such incoherent elements to manage, caution, perhaps, was an element of the greatest military virtue in a general. It might lose many opportunities, and very possibly did, but it incurred no extraordinary perils, such as might not be repaired without great embarrassment.

The bluff, manly person and well-bronzed face of William Washington, a man even more massy of build than Greene, was the first to present itself. Washington was famous at a charge. He affected no military refinements or science. There is our enemy. He is in the way. No more was necessary. Washington understood the rest, and rushed at once to his performance. And Marion followed, slight of form, brown of aspect, with his keen black eyes, and vulture-like hook of nose, Roman all over; quiet of manner, retiring of habit; undistinguished in carriage; and, next to Pickens, one of the most unpresuming of persons, almost shy and timid of approach in society. Too modest, in fact, for the assertion of his own rights.

Harry Lee, of the legion, next presented himself, a person of much more pretension and of genuine dragoon audacity; a keen spirited soldier; who kept his legion in first-rate order, at the expense of everybody else; something of a martinet; something of a carpet knight; but full of talent, which only needed a more wholesome training, to develop into first-rate excellence. He took the general's hand, smiled complacently around upon the group; sauntered about for a while; his dragoon sword jostling the ground as he walked, as was the way with Tarleton's, from its great length. He seemed quite too mercurial to seek a seat. He kept the turf until he suddenly encountered the sardonic smile of Sumter; when he let himself down quietly enough upon the roots of an oak, and watched the approach of the successive parties to the conference.

Sumter's fine features were remarkably composed; composed, perhaps, with some effort — for Sumter was in no good humor with Greene or Lee at this period. He thought himself wronged

by both. The latter had contrived to give offence to both himself and Marion, by his propensity to overbear and manage; and Greene had somewhat become the instrument, blind or otherwise, of this dashing self-complacency of the legionary colonel.

But Greene had erred, besides, of his own head, and both of the partisan generals, Sumter and Marion, were by this time made aware that, while dealing with them, quietly, in the handsomest terms of compliment, he had been writing letters to other persons which spoke slightingly of themselves, their followers, and performances. Perhaps, but for Rutledge, both of them would long before have abandoned the service. Marion *did* seek an occasion to resign, from offences then received; and Sumter finally disbanded his brigade, in indignation, not long after this very council.

But Rutledge himself appears, having reached the camp an hour before. He is followed by Colonel Williams, the adjutant general of the army, a Marylander of good abilities; cool, circumspect, vigilant, and of considerable military talents. Colonel Carrington came with him—a high-toned officer, in whose judgment Greene entertained considerable confidence.

These were all present at the conference, which was not a council of war, by the way, but a sort of military conference for the interchange of opinions. Greene welcomed them all with proper breeding, offered them pleasantly a choice of seats, and, in a few brief remarks, congratulated them on the prospect of affairs. He then motioned Rutledge, with whom he had already enjoyed a private conversation. To Rutledge he was greatly disposed to defer, finding him, as he himself confesses, one of the most remarkable persons he had ever met.

And he *was* such! The genius of John Rutledge was eminently executive. He possessed that grand sweep of vision, in civil affairs, which, in the military, is perhaps somewhat disparaged by the French descriptive phrase—the *coup d'œil*. With a grasp of the eye he not only took in the whole field, in generals, but he grouped the details of it, in proper relationship, and at the same glance, with equal confidence and facility. His mind was wide, expansive, penetrating—and—*honest*. All its instincts, if we may so speak, were truthful. The true was its natural aim; its impulsive seeking. He was at once frank and

earnest; hence he was a popular orator of great command, ready at the emergency, and always compelling respect, and winning confidence. He was bold, ardent, just. He conceived readily the grandeur of the trust reposed in him, and he had no such small passions as could divert, or dissuade, from its execution. He merged—and this is the grand secret of patriotism always—he merged his individual pride and pleasure—his mind and his affections, equally, in the cause which he had undertaken. We hardly express our full meaning in these words. He was not, briefly, so much John Rutledge, as the man of the times and country. In these he lived, and was properly himself. He was at once an individual and a representative man! and such are the greatest!

He spoke—and with that ease, sweetness, strength, and earnestness, which command attention and secure confidence. His words entered men's ideas, and gave them the necessary utterance. Not a man present but fancied, as he spoke, that he himself had furnished the *motif* for every syllable that was uttered.

"I congratulate you, general, and you gentlemen, all, at this present meeting, and under such favorable auspices. Our affairs, in one little month, have wonderfully brightened. The prospect is now good, that we shall compel our enemy very soon to lift his foot entirely from the breast of our little state. You have already freed her, in great part, from his iron footsteps. He has been driven from all his strongholds in the interior. His fortresses, everywhere, have been dismantled. Camden is now ours; Ninety-Six, Augusta, Granby, Forts Galphin, Grierson, Motte; and it needs but a thousand bayonets to expel him from the post of Orangeburg, which lies before us now! And this conquest, under our present auspices, can not long be wanting. You have circumscribed his bounds, and it is only between the Santee and the Edisto, that he makes a show of possession; and it is only in the garrison of Charleston that he makes any show of security. *Here*, if he dares to linger until we can recruit, we have him—to be destroyed at pleasure, like an elephant in a morass. These, gentlemen, have been the fruits of our toils since the opening of the present campaign. They are sufficiently encouraging to justify the most sanguine hopes, that

we shall finally expel the invader from his securities—from all our territory, even before the close of the present season.

"But you need respite! Our summer is even more terribly hostile to man than the winters of Siberia! Your toils have been already too much prolonged, particularly in the case of those who have so nobly come to our succor, from the sister states of Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, and Delaware. We, who know our climate, must not suffer your patriotism to peril your lives, unnecessarily. You must be respited! You must seek the salubrious hills of the Santee, where I have already made such provisions for your comfort, as was possible to our resources. There, your general can reorganize his infantry, and establish it on a better footing for performance. There, while you rest, you will probably receive such supplies from Congress, of arms and ammunition, as will enable you to face, and grapple with the best-appointed veterans of Europe. I am promised these supplies, and doubt not that we shall seasonably receive them.

"Meanwhile, our cavalry and mounted riflemen, in which lies our greatest strength, need not be idle. I am about to propose to them a service, in which, I am sure, their patriotism will not fail, and from which I hope that we shall derive the happiest advantages to the country. You have seen with what efficacy we wrought, when our troops were thrown between the outposts of the enemy, and his base of operations. We have seen that the movement has compelled him to contract his circle of control, within the narrowest limits. I am for pursuing the same process, for compelling him to quit all his interior posts—Orangeburg, Eutaw, Wantoot, Watboo, Biggin, Monk's Corner, and Dorchester—by once more passing between him and his Charleston garrison. With the overwhelming force, in cavalry, which we command, we can cut him off from all supplies—from all communication—and alarm him lest he himself be cut off in the interior. To do this, all that needs, is to hurl our mounted men across the country, from Orangeburg to the seaboard, covering the space, patrolling it everywhere, cutting his scattered bands to pieces, and thundering at the very gates of Charleston. If this proceeding does not make the British lion turn tail on the Edisto for ever, he is of much tougher material than

we have ever found him yet! Do not understand me as disposed to disparage his courage or his firmness, his valor or his resources; but only to say that our process is one to shake even a greater firmness and courage, than he has ever yet shown, brave, and stubborn, and audacious as he is! What think you, gentlemen, of the scheme of operations. It is understood, gentlemen, that the call is for *volunteers*—it is not an absolute command for service! It appeals to a portion only of the army, and presupposes repose for the rest. To *command* this would be a hardship. To appeal to the mounted men, by whom alone the duty can be done, is all that remains to me, as governor of the state. I wait for your reply."

Sumter instantly answered:—

"The scheme is a good one, governor—admirable, in fact—and can hardly fail to produce the results expected. I presume you can hardly doubt that I am ready at any moment. I think I may safely answer for my command."

"What says General Marion?"

Marion smiled as he answered:—

"I am so constantly in the saddle, governor, that I am afraid I should find summer quarters tedious. You will please take for granted that my people are prepared for duty."

"Colonel Lee?—Colonel Washington?"

Lee answered for the legion; and Washington made his great sabre answer for him, drawing it half out, and thrusting it back with a clang that sounded effectively his only half-spoken sentence of approbation. He was a man of few words, and his bright, upward look, declared his readiness for a share in the enterprise.

It was then scanned in all its details.

"And now," said Rutledge, "if you will suffer me, General Greene, I will nominate General Sumter for the command of the whole enterprise."

Greene bowed his head affirmatively, and Sumter quickly said:

"I am greatly honored, sir, in your own and the choice of the governor. I accept the appointment with pride, and trust that my abilities will prove worthy of your confidence; will equal, with proper performance, my own desires, and realize all the results which you anticipate from the expedition."

Rutledge continued:—

"General Marion gives me to understand, General Sumter, that he will gladly serve under your banner: I know that he will admirably and earnestly second all your enterprises; I take for granted that you will be supported with equal ardor by Colonels Washington and Lee, Colonels Lacy and Singleton, the Hamptons, Taylor, Maham and Harden; all, I know, will rejoice to engage in an expedition, the duties of which are so honorable, and so arduous, and which promise such glorious results to the country.

"Your command, General Sumter, as General Greene advises me, will consist of all the state troops, the legion of Colonel Lee, and a detachment of artillery with a single field-piece; in the whole about one thousand men. To such a force of mounted men, the foe can oppose nothing. With this particular arm, moving with your accustomed celerity, you may surprise all his outposts below, capture all his detachments, or compel their rapid flight to the city. These are the objects of the expedition; the farther results of which must be to compel the army of Rawdon to fall back for its own safety, upon the seaboard, where we hope to confine him for the future, and finally conquer and expel him thence.

"With your permission, General Greene, I will reserve Major Sinclair, whom I design to advance to a colonelcy in the state line, for a separate duty, with the single company of Captain St. Julien. He will co-operate, as occasion serves, with the command of General Sumter, being also designed for service below. The command of General Pickens, will need the same temporary respite with the infantry. His horses are exhausted in the pursuit of Cruger and the tories, as he himself writes: 'So exhausted that they could neither get up with the enemy, nor, if they could succeed in doing so, get away from him.' It is fortunate that ours are in better condition for the great foray which we now contemplate—a foray, gentlemen, which, I trust, will make itself known to future times, as the 'Raid of the Dog-days,' constituting, as it will, a novelty in our campaign, an episode of peculiar character and interest, by reason equally of its own glorious results, and of the season in which it is undertaken—a season, which, hitherto, has usually given

entire repose to our armies; the ardency of our sun usually proving quite sufficient to subdue the ardency of our patriotism. That you are thus prepared to deny yourselves the usual respite, adds the crowning laurels to your chivalry. May the God of battles accord you the health, the strength, the energy, which are essential to render your patriotism famous for all future times."

And, with the grace of the accomplished orator, when his task is done, Rutledge bowed to his hearers, then especially to Greene, and receding a pace, remained standing while the latter came forward.

Greene, without being an eloquent or striking speaker, was an impressive one. He had no arts; his manner was one of great simplicity, but of great directness. Speaking briefly, and directly to the point, he always commanded attention.

"You have heard, gentlemen," he said, "what Governor Rutledge has so well delivered. He has delivered our mutual wishes and opinions already agreed upon between us, and has spoken, I am glad to think, your sentiments no less than ours. In the selection of General Sumter for the command of this noble enterprise, in which you are to engage, his choice is mine. In the indication of your objects, we are both agreed as to their results; and in your hands I am sure we shall not be disappointed of our hopes. It remains to me to indicate to you what I conceive to be the best routes to pursue in this expedition. To a certain extent, several bodies of troops must, for awhile, act independently. They will consider themselves detached for the purpose, subject only to the general plan of operation, which requires their early return, as soon as each special separate object is attained, to the headquarters of General Sumter. These detachments will sweep down by every road or avenue which may conduct to Charleston. General Sumter, himself, with such a force as he shall please to reserve to himself, will pursue the Congaree road on the south side of that river, and the east side of Cooper. Colonel Lee with the legion, will attempt the post at Dorchester. But, as we may reasonably calculate on a stout resistance from the garrison at that place, Colonel Henry Hampton, will co-operate with him in this object, and, after securing the bridge at Dorchester, with a de

tachment, will unite the rest of his command with that of Colonel Lee. Colonel Wade Hampton will also co-operate with these bodies, with a detachment of Sumter's cavalry. To one of these parties, must be assigned the task of securing—holding—the bridge over the Four-Holes creek, in order that the several detachments, operating below, may be advised of the movements of Rawdon's force at Orangeburg. A detachment of Marion's men, under Colonel Maham, passing the head of Cooper river and Watboo creek, will penetrate below to the eastward of Biggin's church, and destroy the bridge of Watboo. This will help to obstruct the retreat of the garrison at Biggin and Watboo. A detachment passing to the east of Dorchester, will take the Wassamasaw road to Goose-creek bridge, and cut off all communication between Dorchester and Monck's Corner, and between the latter place and Charleston by the route west of Cooper river. You thus, General Sumter, cover all the possible routes for the escape of the enemy below. You cut off all his communications. You isolate him at Orangeburg, and destroy every post of rest or supply between him and the sea. His necessities will then be to cut his way, through *us*, to Charleston; and, I trust, that, with the rest afforded us now, the main army will soon be in a condition to render this a fruitless attempt! We may even hope, gentlemen, to add to the laurels of the south a *Rawdonade* of equal importance with the *Burgoynade* of Saratoga.

"The farther details, General Sumter, I yield with confidence to your judgment and discretion.

"Gentlemen, we shall march with the dawn for the Congaree. General Pickens, in a letter just received, advises me that Cruger will effect his junction with Rawdon sometime to-night. This junction will place him in command of three thousand troops. We must not wait for his lordship when he shall be thus strengthened. Your mounted men will be required to escort the army to a point of safety, where we may dispense with your further assistance. Colonel Williams will see that due instructions will be issued in general orders before night. For the present our conference is ended. Our official tasks are over.—Governor Rutledge, General Sumter, General Marion—gentlemen all, may I have the pleasure of your company at

supper. I know not what the commissariat and cook can do for us—there is nothing promising, I fear, in our larder; but I suspect we can offer you as wholesome a variety as can be found in camp, and I certainly tender you as warm a welcome."

The invitation was received in silence. There was apparently some embarrassment among the group. Greene himself began to look with embarrassment around him—not knowing what the silence meant—when Rutledge with a merry laugh, exclaimed:—

"I am afraid, general, you are quite too late with these gentlemen as with myself. I fancy they are all engaged elsewhere."

Greene looked about him with the air of a man who thought it exceedingly strange that anybody in the army should be able, in the present condition of the commissariat, to give a dinner, but he did not say so. He knew that it occasioned him no small effort to supply the adequate provision; and who, besides, so capable? As if fully comprehending his thoughts, Rutledge continued:—

"When you fancy, general, that nobody in camp is likely to offer so wholesome a variety of edibles for dinner as yourself, *I* fancy that there is hardly a gentleman present, who does not please himself with the idea that you are mistaken. Come, sir, do not look so distressed. You are yet to learn what resources are possessed by these wild riders of our friend Marion. I do not *know* the fact, but I will venture a goodly dozen of old Madeira, whenever we shall be able to get at the Charleston cellars, that we are all invited to the same mess. I confess myself committed too, and with my own grateful will, and gratified consent, to the supper of Captain Porgy of Marion's."

"And I."

"And I."

"And I,"—from all present, the general himself and Colonel Lee excepted.

"Captain Porgy!" said Greene, "Captain Porgy! Where have I heard of Captain Porgy."

"From me, sir, I suspect," said Lee rather sullenly. "I have dined and supped with Captain Porgy. He is a rare companion—a strange fellow, with a clever French faculty, of making a dish out of a June bug, and a dinner out of—out of—"

"A mere matter of moonshine!" added Rutledge. "And a good dishand dinner he makes of it too, let me tell you. He will contrive to sup bountifully upon elements, upon which simpler folk would starve. If Colonel Lee would finish now, he will tell you that he never supped better in his life than when he supped with Captain Porgy."

"Never, sir; I admit it. I did not feed with the less pleasure that I never once guessed what were the ingredients of the dish."

"Really, gentlemen," said Greene, "I had no idea that I had such a competitor. And what am I to do? I have ordered supper for twenty, and find myself without a guest."

And the general really appeared much mortified.

"Were it consistent with proper discipline and military practice, general," quoth Rutledge, "I should counsel you to do as the rich man had to do in scripture, who made a great feast, and, like yourself, was disappointed in his fine company — so sent out with a dragnet and took in the lame, halt, blind, and every way destitute. But this will hardly answer in our day and country. But, if you will suffer me, I will reconcile all difficulties. If you will permit me to order your cook and butler to send all your supplies to the quarters of the swamp-fox, with my respect to the worthy Captain Porgy, apprizing him that you will honor his table to-night, all will be right. I will take leave to include Colonel Lee in the invitation."

"But this would be a great liberty, governor," said Greene.

"Not a whit, sir. Captain Porgy will feel himself honored, I assure you; — nay, will be greatly pleased that we have dealt with him so frankly. He is a gentleman, sir, of an old house and feather, and knows how to requite a courtesy whatever its aspect."

"But — we shall take him by surprise — so many."

"You forget that nearly all of us are already secured as his guests. Beside, you will send over your own supplies."

Marion *sotto voce* — "If Porgy will suffer them to be brought on table."

And he whispered to Rutledge: —

"Let the meats be sent over before the general's cook has touched them."

"Right! I comprehend," said Rutledge, in a whisper also. Then aloud —

"Trust to me, general; I know my man — I shall be careful not to commit you. I confess my anxiety that you should know Captain Porgy, and see what are the resources of our Low-Country partisans. He will be honored, I repeat, by our frank proceedings; and," in a whisper — "the effect will be good upon our people. They love to see a frank simplicity and open confidence in great men."

Greene smiled at the compliment, his blue eyes looking archly into those of Rutledge: —

"Ah! governor, you are more of a tactician than any military man I know."

"In the commissariat, perhaps," responded the other. "Well, you give me permission."

"If you say so."

"I do! and will give all the necessary orders, despatch a a note to our host, and send over the provisions. But the latter must be done at once, and before your cook has handled them."

"Why so — why not let them be dressed?" said Greene.

"For the best of reasons. If dressed, they would be held in no condition for Captain Porgy's table. Do not be mortified, general, to be told, that your *cuisinier* would never receive his diploma from the hands of Captain Porgy. He is a martinet in the kitchen. He refines upon soups, is sublime in sauces, and altogether scorns and despises the cruel maceration of meat in hot waters, which is the vulgar usage of our cooks in camp. Understand, again, that Captain Porgy is no vulgar person; but a rare fellow for company, a man of soul and humor, and at his table you will be sure to find an appetite though you had already fed to surfeit. As Colonel Lee says, you must be wise enough to take your supper as you take your religion with a perfect faith, which is never guilty of the impertinence of Peter, of questioning the cleanness of the meats which Providence has furnished."

"But everything's wholesome!" said Greene, with a simplicity which argued his Rhode Island ignorance of such authorities as Ude, and Glass, and Savarin.

"Wholesome!" exclaimed Lee — "By Jupiter, General Greene, I do not know that I have tasted wholesome food since my last supper with Captain Porgy. I know not why he has not invited me, since I am very sure no man could have done more justice to his fare."

Lee was evidently piqued.

"An omission easily accounted for, Colonel Lee," answered Rutledge promptly, "since you had not come in from below, when the invitations were sent out; no one could say that you would be in to-night. I take upon myself to say that no one will be more welcome to his table than yourself."

"Well, if the taste to do justice to his table is sufficient commendation, I may safely assert that you are right," said Lee, his complacency always making belief easy, in respect to his own welcome. Marion looked grave, but said nothing. *He* knew that Porgy would not, of himself, invite Lee. He had too seriously displeased the partisans; but Marion was not displeased that Lee should invite himself, which, in his, as in the case of Greene, was substantially the fruit of Rutledge's diplomacy. The latter, as usual, had his own way. The despatch was sent to Porgy, and Greene's cook was seasonably arrested in the very act of doing murder upon his edibles. The party adjourned to meet at the sylvan camp of the swamp-fox

CHAPTER XLV.

DOINGS IN THE APOLLO CHAMBER.

Our partisan division of the army, with their horses, occupied no small extent of territory. Our Captain Porgy, himself with his little personal equipage, demanded considerable space. He was the person always to secure that "ample room and verge enough," which, as he himself said, were essential to his individual girth. "My breadth of belt," he was wont to say, "implies a fair field; and, having that, I ask no favors." Besides, being of social habits, his mess was always a large one. Among his immediate associates, retainers rather, he kept not only his cook, but his poet; the one almost as necessary as the other. Then, he never was without a guest, and whenever his commissariat was particularly well supplied, he was sure to have a full table. Such an idea as a good table, without an adequate number of guests to enjoy it, seemed to him a thing vile, unreasonable, inhuman, and utterly unchristian. We have seen that, particularly fortunate in his foray among the green-jacketed denizens of the Caw-caw, he had made arrangements for a larger circle than usual. His own tastes and purposes requiring it, Captain Porgy usually chose his own ground whenever tents were to be pitched. He had a great eye to proper localities.

"The open woods, on the south and west," was his rule. "Let the swamp and thicket cover my back on the east. That east wind has been of evil tendency from the earliest periods of time. The Bible speaks of it. A bad-tempered person, soured and surly, growling always, and insufferable from bile and conceit, is said to fill his bowels with the east wind. It has a bad effect on the best bowels. Give me just opening enough on the east for the purposes of draught, but let your tent be open to the full pressure of the winds from south and west. You need, in

our climate, an eastern opening at the dinner-hour, dining at three, or thereabout; but beware of it after the sun has set. Don't sleep with the east wind blowing upon you. If you do, face it—let your feet receive it first. Every wind that blows has a specific quality. The east, northeast, and southeast, are all more or less pernicious, muddy, insidious, hateful Our natural winds in midsummer are from the south and west. The south persuades you to languor, pleasantly relaxes, discourages the exertion which would be too exhaustive for the season. The west is the agitator, the thunder-storm wind, that purges and purifies; the northwest is the cleaning wind, that sweeps up the sky, and brushes off all its cobwebs. Each wind having thus a specific mission, it is wonderful that men who build know so little of the means of ventilation. Now, you see, I choose my ground with an open pine-forest in front, that is south and west and northwest. I take care that the land slopes down from me in all these directions. If there be hill, swamp, or dense thicket, I put them, with the devil, behind me. I have here chosen the very pleasantest spot in the whole encampment. There is not one of these continental officers who knows anything of the subject. Yet, to the health of an army, a difference of fifty yards in the location of a camp, is very frequently all the difference between life and death!"

And, in that broad, terrace-like spread of wood and thicket, he had chosen the most agreeable region. The pine-woods opened at his feet, and spread away almost interminably, giving the necessary degree of shade, yet leaving free passage for the wind.

"Free circulation, Geordie Dennison," said he, as with hands outspread he seemed to welcome the gentle play of the breezes reeking up from the southwest—"that is the secret of health—free circulation for the winds, the waters, and the blood. It is stagnation that is death. This is the reason why a pine-forest is more healthy than any other. It is the only forest that suffers free play to the winds. Hence you hear the music in a pine-forest which you hear in no other. The breezes pour through, and swell up, until all the tree-tops become so many organ-pipes. The vulgar notion is that there is some virtue in the odor of the pines to neutralize malaria. But this is all non-

sense. Pine-woods that have a dense undergrowth, are not more healthy than any other. It is the shape of the tree, a tall column, without lateral branches, naked a hundred feet high, and arching above, umbrella fashion, into a grand ceiling, which shuts out the intense heat of the sun, and suffers free exercise to the breeze. Here it plays with delight and impunity. In the dense thickets it trickles only, and finally stagnates; and hence the fevers of uncleared lands. Bays, swamps, ponds are unhealthy, not because of the water which they contain, but because of the dense thickets which they nurture. The hottest place in the world in midsummer, is a deep forest or thicket, with a close undergrowth. Fools talk of decaying vegetation as the secret of disease; yet when our fevers are raging most, vegetation has not begun to decay. Gardens, fields, forests, are never more fresh and beautiful, never more vigorous and verdant, than when death seems lurking under every flower, like some venomous reptile watching for and creeping to the ear of the unconscious sleeper. But, Geordie Dennison, boy, once suppose that the air is stagnant in any locality, and you need not suppose the necessity for its impregnation by any deleterious agent. A stagnant atmosphere is, *per se*, malaria. And that fact that we can assign a distinct locality for the disease—that we can say with confidence, to sleep here is death, while you may sleep with safety within half a mile—establishes the fact conclusively that the atmosphere is localized—no matter by what cause—though even that is a matter which I have considered also—and once let the atmosphere be fixed, and it is only in degree that it differs from that of an old sink or well. It is putrid, and to inhale it is a danger. You can not impregnate with miasma any region, where the winds are allowed to penetrate freely from three points of the compass, and where they do penetrate. When we are very sickly, you will always find a pressure of winds, daily from a single quarter, for a long-continued period of time. The atmosphere loses its equilibrium, as it were; the winds lack their *balance;* and running one course only, they run into a *cul de sac*, as water that can not escape, rises to a level with its source, becomes a pond, and stagnates. A thunder-storm purifies, not from its electricity, as some contend, but because it is a storm. All storms purify because

they agitate. They disperse the local atmosphere over a thousand miles of space, and restore its equilibrium."

"But, Captain Porgy, were it not better that you should be thinking of your supper and company, instead of philosophizing here about the atmosphere?"

"It is because I am thinking of my company and supper, Master Geordie, that I do philosophize about the atmosphere. A wholesome atmosphere is half of a good supper. We can eschew the water. We need not drink that, if we can find any other liquor; but make what wry faces we will, the atmosphere we must drink, even though we know it to be impregnated with poison. Better drink the vilest ditch-water a thousand times. That may disorder the stomach, but the other must vitiate the lungs and so directly disease the blood and the heart. I am trying to teach you, sir, that in giving a good supper or dinner to your friends, you are to serve it up in properly-ventilated apartments."

"Well, we have it airy enough here."

"True; but had it been left to anybody else, ten to one you would have had our tents pitched in a villanous thicket where we never could have got a breath of air. Look, now, at the Legion encamped on the left; they are in a bottom, the breeze passing clean over their heads. Their camp-master had no idea of what was the duty to be done, beyond the simply getting room enough for the horses and wagons of some three hundred men. Sir, the partisan cavalry have never been so healthy as when I have been permitted to select the ground for their bivouac."

"That's true!"

"To be sure it's true; and you see the fruits of it in the pleasant sleeps that we enjoy, and the hardy elasticity with which we travel. There never was any people so exposed as ours have been, night and day, in all weathers, and the most wearisome marches, that have ever enjoyed such admirable health. And they owe it to me, sir—to me, Geordie Dennison—yet, d—n 'em, they are not half so grateful for this blessing as for my soups and suppers. They would readily compound to drink any quantity of malaria, if they could swallow a pint of my rum-punch after it."

"Ah, they regard the rum-punch as the antidote, and there is nothing unreasonable, therefore, in their practice. But, captain, the hour latens."

"*Latens!* By what right do you use that word?"

"It's a good word, captain."

"So it is; but I never heard it used before."

"Very likely; but would you permit that argument to be used against any new dish that Tom should put on the table to-night!"

"No, sir; no, Geordie, you are right. You could not have answered me better if you had argued a thousand years. And I will remember the word;—so, as the hour *latens*, Geordie, get up and help me with these tables. I must summon Frampton and Millhouse. We shall need their knives and hatchets. I have invited thirty-one guests, Geordie, not counting you and Lance; we three will make the number thirty-four. There's no such table to be spread in camp to-night. Think of it;—a simple captain of militia giving a supper to thirty guests, and upon such short commons as are allowed us. Half of the poor devils in camp think it monstrous impudent of me to give a supper at all—and to thirty persons——"

"They can't guess how it's to be done."

"No! indeed! the blockheads! But their vexation increases when they find my guests all outranking myself. The envious rascals! Beware of envy, Geordie—it is the dirtiest, sneakingest, meanest little passion in the world, the younger brother of vanity, furnishing all the venom to its sleek-skinned and painted senior."

"And you are to have the governor, captain?"

"Ay, he accepts. John Rutledge is a great fellow, without affectation, Geordie—no pretender—one of the few men who really do *think*. The greater number, even when they greatly rank, only repeat each other—they do not think Thought, George Dennison, is really confined to a very few Men, as a race, are not thinking animals. They are gregarious and imitative. They go in droves and follow a leader, whom they contrive after a while to mimic after a monkey fashion. Thought is always an individual. But—where is that boy Frampton? Sound your whistle, George."

The whistle was sounded.

"Now help me with these poles. There are forty cut. We must have crotch-sticks—two, four, six, eight, ten, twelve—it will require twenty-four; we must make our tables solid."

Lance Frampton now appeared, followed by half a dozen stout young roopers, bearing slim green poles upon their shoulders, forked sticks, and all the appliances necessary to the construction of the rustic tables and seats of the company. Long practice had made all of them familiar with the rude sort of manufacture which was required. The crotch-sticks were soon driven upright into the ground, in frequent parallels; cross pieces were laid in the crotchets of these, and the poles were stretched along, forming a crossed table with four ends, for so many dignitaries, and capable to accommodate forty guests with ease. Of a similar, but stouter fashion, were the seats for the guests. It was surprising how soon the area was filled—how soon the mechanical preparations for the feast were fashioned. The amphitheatre beneath the pines was ample. Porgy, as he boasted, had the proper eye for a locality. When reared and steadied, stanchioned and strengthened, the tables were covered with great oak-leaves, green, looking very clean, nice, and fresh—a verdant tablecloth.

"Now, see that you have torches, Lance; for, though we have a glorious moon, we need torches for the dark corners. Many of the guests will bring their negroes to wait. But we shall need some waiters besides. Engage some of these young chaps. They shall sweep the platters clean. Forget nothing, boy. We are to have big wigs to supper, remember. Geordie, come with me to *our* wagon. I think we shall astonish these epauleted gentry to-night."

And the two turned off to another part of the wood where stood the little wagon already described—a sort of covered box—a thing which one man might have rolled, but to which a couple of stout hackneys were harnessed, when taken.

"Little," said Porgy, as he unlocked the cover of the vehicle, "little did stuttering Pete dream what he lost and we gained, when we cut off the four wagons of Stewart. His eyes opened only upon the big wagons. He never gave a look at the one little one upon which I fastened—as if the most precious con-

modities were not always packed in the smallest compass! Yet, look there, Geordie."

The poet looked in:—

"Lemons, captain."

"Ay, lemons and white sugar, and nutmegs, and cloves, and spices of all sorts, and an anchor of Geneva, and a box of cocoa, and a bag of coffee, and a good supply of old Jamaica, and, see you that keg?—tongues, beef-tongues, English beef-tongues. Now please you to read the name on the cover; ay! Lord Rawdon's own prog, by the pipers, specially selected for his table and palate. We shall astonish these wooden-headed continentals to-night, Geordie! won't we? You thought me mad, didn't you, when I invited so many? But I knew what I was about. They shall stare, they shall sup, though they lament for ever, after the acquisition of such a taste as their vulgar fortunes can never hereafter satisfy. But mum! Not a word in anticipation."

And Forgy closed the wagon with haste and locked it, as half a dozen troopers lounged carelessly by, looking, with some curiosity as they passed, to the proceedings of the two.

"Stay here, Geordie, and keep watch till I return. I must put Millhouse on duty over this wagon, or there will be a Flemish account of its contents when supper's called. The morals of the dragoon service, imply theft as a necessity. A good scout has all the capabilities of a good pickpocket."

And, moralizing as he went, Forgy hurried off for succor. Dennison was relieved by Millhouse, a one-armed trooper of iron aspect, and as stubborn of purpose as a mule. The wagon was safe in his keeping as long as his left arm could lift sabre or pistol—and he was duly armed with both.

The next visit of our host was to Tom, the cook, who had a precinct of his own, some twenty-five yards from the spot where the tables had been spread. The terrapin soup was discussed, the *ragout;* the stew; the boiled tongues; nothing escaped attention. Then, a survey was taken of the crockery; the bowls, plates, dishes; the knives and forks; the spoons of iron, the drinking vessels of delph, tin, or calabash. These commodities were too frail of character, not to need the greatest care and attention; and every feast given by our captain, mortified

him with the slenderness of his resources. But there was no remedy. If half a dozen good bowls of delph, and platters of tin, could be provided for the more distinguished guests, the rest might surely be satisfied with clean calabashes. We will suppose our captain satisfied in respect to these things. He was in the midst of the examination, however, venting his annoyances at his limited resources, in uneasy exclamations, when a messenger from Rutledge brought him the note from that personage apprizing him that Greene and Lee would appear among his guests. The governor wrote:—

"I shall take the liberty, my dear Captain Porgy, of bringing with me a couple of additional guests, in General Greene and Colonel Lee, knowing that your provision will not only be ample, but that the taste which usually presides over your banquets will give to our friends from Rhode Island and Virginia such a notion of the tastes of Apicius and Lucullus, as certainly never yet dawned upon them in their own half-civilized regions. Your own courtesy will do the rest and will, I trust, sufficiently justify the confidence with which I have insisted upon their coming. "Yours,

"JOHN RUTLEDGE."

"Humph!" exclaimed Porgy, "I should not have ventured to ask General Greene, not that I stand in awe of his epaulettes, but it is so rare to find a *parvenu* who would not hold such an invitation from a poor captain of militia, to be a piece of impertinence and presumption. Our own folks know me too well to exhibit any such *gaucherie*. As for Lee, he is a popinjay! I should never ask him myself; but have no objection that he should occasionally appear among gentlemen who can teach him, by example, how gentlemen can be good fellows without any loss of dignity.—Geordie—your pen and a scrap of paper. I hope I diminish none of your verses by consuming your foolscap."

The pen and paper were had, and our captain wrote:—

"Governor Rutledge can take no liberty for the propriety of which his name is not a sufficient guaranty. Captain Porgy will be most happy to welcome any guests whom he may think proper to bring."

This written, he handed it to the messenger. It was then

that Greene's cook uncovered a small tumbril or box in a wheelbarrow, containing the uncooked provisions which had been destined for his own table. Porgy looked at the bloody and livid meats with unqualified disgust.

"But," said he *sotto voce*, "we can't reject them. Here, Tom."

The cook appeared, apron in front and knife in hand.

"Tom, take charge of these provisions. They are sent by the general—General Greene, do you hear? Use them. Cook them. Turn them into soup, hash, steak, what you will!" then, as the messengers of Rutledge and Greene disappeared—"but d—m you, boy, don't let them show themselves upon my table. The meat is villanously butchered. That alone should condemn it. Make it up for some of these young fellows that have been working for us. And—Tom—"

"Well, maussa—talk quick."

"Don't forget the balls. Let there be a plenty in the soup."

"Psho, maussa, enty I know."

"Enough! Begone!"

The active mind of our corpulent captain began to grow restless. He had seen to everything that he could think of, and grew peevish from nothing to do. Suddenly he stuck his fingers into his hair.

"No! the vessels for the punch; Geordie. By heavens, I had almost forgotten. Let us after the punchbowls, and then for the manufacture. *You* are good at that; a poet should be. Curious problem, Geordie—the affinity between poetry and the bottle."

"Not at all. It only implies the ardency of the poet. It is so with the orator. You never saw poet or orator yet, that was not ardent and fond of the juices of the grape."

"Not the didactic orders, surely. But how is it, then, that Bacchus is not your deity instead of Apollo?"

"Because Apollo, with virtues of his own, includes those of Bacchus. He is a ripener of Bacchus, and loves not the wine less, nor is less the true god of it, because he employs a vintner I see no difficulty in the matter."

"And, perhaps, there is none. Yet what would Apollo say, or Bacchus even, to such a punchbowl as ours."

And he pointed to an enormous calabash, holding a couple

of gallons at the least, that, duly valued and taken care of, had survived all the vicissitudes of the campaign.

"They would, either of them, feel that there was wholesome propriety in the vessel. It is one which Ceres has presented for the occasion, to a kindred deity. Boon nature has provided where vulgar art has failed. It would be much more staggering to either of the ancient gods to try them with the Jamaica, instead of the blood of Tuscany."

"Ah! they never got such liquor on Olympus. Their nectar was a poor wishy-washy sort of stuff, of not more body than some of those thin vaporing French and German liquors, of which we have had a taste occasionally. Their wine of Tuscany, nay, the Falernian of Horace, would not take rank now-a-days with the juices of the common corn, prepared according to our process. Drinking whiskey or Jamaica, Nero might have been a fool, a wretch, a murderer—might fire his city or butcher his mother—might have committed any crime, but cowardice! Whiskey or Jamaica might have saved Rome from Gaul and Vandal. The barbarians, be sure, drank the most potent beverages."

"A notion deserving of study. We drink deep now-a-days. Will our descendants beat us? Will they laugh at our potations, which rarely leave a gentleman on his legs after midnight?"

"Ah! say nothing of our progeny. Do not build upon the degenerates. It may be that the milksops will fancy it bad taste, nay, even immoral, on the part of their ancestors, to have swallowed Jamaica or whiskey at all. In proportion as their heads are weak, will they pronounce ours vicious; and just because we have a certain amount of strength in our virtue—a certain quality of brawn and blood and muscle, to keep our sentiment from etherealizing—growing into mere thin air—will they presume to stroke their beards in self-complaisant satisfaction, thanking God that such poor *publicans*, have given way to a more saintly race of sinners. I am half inclined to thank my stars that, when I disappear, the race of Porgy will not be continued in the person of one who prides himself upon having no head—for a bottle!"

"Yes! save us from all degenerate children. But, captain, will this *our* calabash of punch suffice for forty? Impossible.

Two gallons among forty! Never in the world! Why, sir, there are three generals, and one governor, a score of colonels, and others of inferior rank, who are emulous of great men's virtues. Two gallons to forty such persons."

"Oh! don't stop to calculate. Luckily there are two calabashes."

And the little wagon yielded up the desired article.

"Make it rich, Geordie."

"Captain Porgy, when they drink of this liquor, each man will feel that his will has been made. He will feel that he has no more care in life—will fold his robes about him for flight."

"Or fall! Well, give us a taste. I profess to be a very competent judge of what a good Jamaica punch should be."

Smacks his lips.

"The proportions are good: the acid has yielded to the embrace of the sugar with the recognition of a perfect faith, and both succumb to the spirit, as with the recognition of a perfect deity. Next to poetry, Geordie, you are an adept at punch."

Geordie somewhat proudly:—

"Yes, captain, on this score I feel safe. I am not always certain of my verses. I sometimes feel that they lack the sweet and the ardent—but I am never doubtful of the perfect harmony that prevails among all the elements when I manufacture punch."

Porgy quaffs off the contents of the *dipper*.

"Geordie, you are a benefactor. When this war ceases, you shall partake my fortunes. You shall live with me; and, between punch and poetry, we will make the latter end of life a felicitous *finale* to a very exciting drama. By the way, Geordie, talking of poetry and punch reminds me. You must be prepared with something good to-night. I shall have you out. You shall give us some heroic ballad. I know you have not been drowsing in that thicket for nothing. Have you got anything ready?"

"I *have* been doing a trifle, but—"

"None of your buts. Get aside, and memorize it. These two vessels of punch, meanwhile, we will put under lock and key, and yield to the guardianship of Sergeant Millhouse."

CHAPTER XLVI.

HOW PORGY FEASTED THE CAPTAINS.

With vulgar people, a dinner party is the occasion of much fuss and fidgeting. The vulgar egotism is always on the *qui vive* lest something should go wrong—lest something should be wanting to the proper effect—lest, in brief, some luckless excess or deficiency should certainly convey to the guest the secret of those deficiencies, in taste, manners, experiences, and resources, which would, if known, be fatal to the claims of good breeding and high ton which the host is most anxious to establish. Those, on the contrary, who feel assured on such points are apt to take the events of a dinner-table coolly and with comparative indifference. A blunder or a deficiency of steward or servant, occasions little or no concern; is never allowed to disturb the equilibrium of the master, who takes for granted that such small matters will be ascribed, by every sensible guest, to the right cause; and for the opinion of all other persons he cares not a button.

The result of this equanimity is to enable him to keep *his mind "in hand"* for the entertainment of his company. He is able to observe and to minister with promptness and full resource, as his wits are not disordered by any feverish workings of his *amour propre*. He sees what is wanting at a glance; supplies the deficiency with a nod; his servants are duly taught in the value of his nod and glance; and the skill of the host, by which the guests are diverted, enables Jack and Gill to wipe up the water which they have spilt so awkwardly, in their uphill progress, without attracting any notice—without filling the scene with most admired disorder.

Our host *knows* his company, and conjures up the special topic which appeals directly to the tastes or the fancies of each

He is vigilant even while he seems most at ease; when his indifference is most apparent, it is made to cover a becoming solicitude for the comfort of the humblest person present. He provides himself with the proper cue to all your prejudices and affections, as by a divine instinct, so that he steers clear of the one, and shapes his course directly for the other; and when the waters are unluckily ruffled, by some bull-headed companion. who treads on his neighbor's toes without even suspecting that he has corns, our host is at hand to pour oil upon the troubled waters, and soothe to calm the temper which is ruffled. He contrives, at the same time, that the offender shall be taught the nature of his offence, without being brought up to the halberds and set in pillory,

"*Pour les encourager les autres.*"

There was nothing doubtful about the *aplomb* of Captain Porgy. Having prepared his feast according to the full extent of his resources; drilled his awkward squad to the utmost of his capacity and their susceptibilities; seen that they were in sufficient numbers for proper attendance; and made, in brief, all his preparations, he gave himself no further concern, but prepared to receive his guests, with the easy good nature, the frank politeness, the smiling grace, of an old-school gentleman. And it is quite an error to talk, as we are apt to do, of the formality of the old-school gentleman. The gentleman of two hundred or one hundred years ago, differed very slightly in his bearing from the same class at the present day. In one degree as his ceremonials ran into formalities, did he lose the character of the gentleman. In no period was mere form and buckram ever confounded, by sensible people, with politeness and refinement.

Never was gentleman more perfectly at ease in crowded assembly, yet more solicitous of the claims of all about him, than our corpulent captain. His shrewd good sense, nice tastes, playful humors, and frank spirit, all harmonizing happily, enabled him to play the host generally to the equal satisfaction of all his company. He had the proper welcome for each as he drew nigh; the proper word, which set each person at his ease, and prepared him for the development of all his conversational resources.

Among the first of his guests to appear were Governor Rutledge and General Greene. "The really great," said Porgy to Lance Frampton who stood behind him, "never keep the table waiting."

The approach to the scene was through a great natural avenue of lofty green pines, through which the moon was peeping curiously with a bright smile, a disinterested spectator of the proceedings. Music timed the approaches of the guests, the army band having been secured for the evening. Porgy welcomed his guests at the entrance of the area in which his tables had been spread.

"General Greene, Captain Porgy," said Rutledge. Greene took the outstretched hand of the host, saying:—

"What I have heard of you, Captain Porgy, makes me trespass without fear of the consequences."

"And what I know of General Greene enables me to welcome him with every hope of the consequences. I am very grateful to Governor Rutledge for doing that which, as a poor captain of militia, I should scarcely have ventured to do myself."

"I knew my customers both, my dear captain," said Rutledge, "and knew how little was necessary to render the regular and volunteer service grateful to each other."

"Be seated, gentlemen," said Porgy, "while I put myself on duty for a while;" and he resumed his place at the opening of the avenue, while Sumter, Marion, and the rest severally presented themselves, were welcomed and conducted to the interior by young Frampton, who did the duties of an aid. Colonel Lee was among the latest to appear.

"My dear Porgy," said he condescendingly—"I am late; but the cavalry of the legion is on vigilant duty to-night, and a good officer you know—eh!"

And he left it to our host to conceive the rest.

"Col. Lee may be forgiven, if late among his friends, when we know that his enemies rarely reproach him for a like remissness."

The grace of Porgy's manner happily blended with the grave dignity of his address. Lee smiled at the compliment:—

"Always ready, Porgy—never to be outdone in the play of compliment, or the retort courteous;" and while speaking he was ushered in with other visiters.

The company was at length assembled. The music ceased. A single bugle sounded from the amphitheatre, and the guests disposed themselves without confusion under the whispered suggestions of Lieutenant Frampton. Porgy took his place at the head of the table, standing, till all were seated.

"Gentlemen," said he, "be pleased to find places at the board. Colonel Singleton, you are my *vis-a-vis*. Governor Rutledge will you honor me by sitting at my right. General Greene, I have presumed to assign you the seat at my left."

Right and left of Singleton, Marion and Sumter were placed. At one end of the table crossing the centre of the board, Colonel Lee was seated, Colonel Maham occupied the other. Carrington, Horry, Mellichampe, St. Julien, and others found places between these several termini. Scarcely had they been seated when four great calabash tureens were placed severally at the extremities, the odorous vapors from which appealed gratefully to every nostril in company.

"Turtle soup!" was the delighted murmur.

"And lemons!"

And as the smoking vessels were set before the governor and General Greene, the former exclaimed:—

"Faith, Captain Porgy, your last voyage to the West Indies seems to have been a highly prosperous adventure."

"In truth," said Greene, "I am half inclined to think that there must have been some such enterprise, of which General Marion has forgotten to apprize me."

"I begin seriously to suspect him," said Rutledge. "The fact is that General Marion is so fond of secret enterprises, and audacious ones—does things with so much despatch, and thinks it so easy to do the impossible, that I half believe he has made a three nights' run for the Havana, or sent off a favorite squad on a sortie in that direction. Say, general, is it not so? Let us know the truth of it. You found, among your captures at Georgetown, some ready-rigged sloop or schooner, and sent her out on a cruise in anticipation of this very occasion."

"Nay, governor, the merits of the enterprise, such as it was, and the fruits thereof, are due entirely to our host. It was his adventure wholly, though we share the spoils."

"But, where—where—where—" began Peter Horry, stut-

tering, "where the devil did he—did he—get 'em—turtles and lemons! I don't—don't—understand it—at all."

"Better not press the inquiry, Horry," said Singleton with a sly smile upon the company—"the discovery will hardly add to your own [illegible]."

"How—my laurels! What—what—I want to—to know—have my laurels—to do—to do—with the matter?"

"Let's have it, Colonel Singleton," said Rutledge eagerly. "Out with the story. Colonel Horry is so seldom to be caught napping that I shall rejoice to have one story at his expense."

"Ay, ay, the story, Singleton," from a dozen voices around the board.

"Tell—tell—tell, if you will," stuttered Horry—"only be sure, and tell—the—the truth, and shame—you know—who."

"The adventure illustrates the military character of the two gentlemen most admirably," said Singleton. "Colonel Horry is a gentleman of large eyes and grapples with objects of magnitude always. It is Captain Porgy's pleasure to be discriminating and select. The lemons and a variety of other edibles are furnished, unwillingly, I grant you, by Lord Rawdon himself. They form a part of the supplies brought up by Colonel Stewart. In dashing at Stewart's convoy, Horry passed a mean little wagon in the rear, as quite unworthy his regards. He swept off as you know three or four others of considerable value to the army. But the very littleness of this wagon which Horry had despised, fixed the regards of our host. He quietly possessed himself of it, and was rewarded with the private stores designed for Lord Rawdon himself." The story produced a laugh at the expense of Horry.

"Who—who—who—the devil," said he, would have thought—of—of—anything good in—that rickety concern? I'd like to know, Captain Porgy, what you got besides the lemons?"

"Whit, sugars, coffee, tea, spices, Spanish sweetmeats, preserved ginger, three kegs of Jamaica, and a goodly variety besides!"

"The d—l!—and—and—I to miss 'em all."

"But you got loads of bacon and flour, Horry."

"Several bales of blankets."

"Ay, and a bathing-tub and complete set of chamber crockery!"

"What," said Rutledge, "was there a bathing-tub and chamber crockery?"

"Yes, indeed."

"Who could have wanted that, I wonder?"

"Some young ensign of the buffs or blues," said Porgy, "whose mother was duly considerate of the young man's skin in a warm climate. You should have discovered Colonel Horry's visage when that wagon was burst open and the contents revealed. The bathing-tub and furniture filled the wagon."

"What did he say, Porgy? Tell us that!"

"Say! Ah! What was it, colonel? Deliver it yourself: nobody can repeat it half so well."

"Re—re—repeat it yourself, if you can!" said Horry stuttering and dipping up his soup with increased rapidity.

"Out with it, Captain Porgy. Horry's speech."

Porgy nodded to Singleton, who answered:—

"I heard it, and as Horry permits will deliver it. He said, stamping his feet in a rage: 'Threw out the d——d basins, and break up the blasted tub. Who would have thought of any fellow being such a bloody booby as to bring a bathing-tub and chamber crockery into a pond and bush country?'"

And slightly imitating the stammer of Horry so as to give a lively idea of his manner, Singleton set the table in a roar. When the laugh had subsided:—

"But did he break up the crockery, Porgy?"

"Every bowl and basin. He was merciless. You never saw such havoc. His broadsword played elephant in the crockery shop to perfection, and the dragoons, delighted with the humors of their colonel, went into the work of demolition with a rush."

"I had—no—no—no use for the d——d—d——d—d——d things," said Horry; "and I was—de—de—de—termined to give the d——d puppy that owned them a lesson."

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"But where did the turtles come from?"

"From the genius of my cook, Tom," said Porgy. 'The turtle are terrapin from the Caw-caw."

"Not the alligator terrapin, captain, I hope," said Sumter. "I could never bring myself to eat any of that order."

"You have done it on this occasion," said Porgy.

"And very effectually too, general," said Singleton, "since I have helped you to a second supply, and you seem in a fair way to need a third."

Sumter looked a little blank.

"Do not be disconfited, general," said Porgy, "since I took the precaution to have all their tails cut off before they were hashed up for the soup."

"But what did you do with the tails?"

"Ah! they were made into balls, with a due proportion of beef and bacon."

"You have caught me beyond escape, captain, since I confess to have done as much execution on the balls as on the soup."

"And you are surprised into a wisdom, general, that has cured you of the prejudices of twenty years! What we call the alligator terrapin is the best of the tribe—the fattest, richest, best flavored. It requires only that skill in the dressing which my man Tom supplies."

The bugle sounded. Sergeant Millhouse marshalled the waiters to their stations, and the emptied vessels were removed. With another blast of the bugle, new dishes were set on the table.

"A noble-looking fish," said Greene. "What fish is this, Captain Porgy?"

"The greatest delicacy of a fresh-water river, this is the Edisto blue cat—for very nice people a most discouraging name.—Gentlemen, look to yourselves. Here is boiled fish, such as George the Third can not procure; dressed in a style which would not discredit the table of our great ally, the king of France. Men of *goût* will of course prefer the boiled—for the undeveloped taste, the fry is abundant. There are perch and trout in these several dishes. They are all fresh from the Edisto within five hours."

"Your troopers have been busy, captain."

"Ay, sir, and my cook. He was fortunate in his search along the river this morning, to come upon three or four fish-traps, which he emptied without leave. Governor, the melted

butter is beside you. By the way, those naval biscuit are also from the stores of my Lord Rawdon.—General, do not dream of defiling that fish with vinegar. It is an abomination in this case. The fish only entreats the butter, and the dressing is complete."

The eye of Porgy swept the table. The guests discussed the fish with the relish of starving men. There was a cessation. The finger of Porgy was lifted. Millhouse's bugle gave tongue, and the fish was superseded with a variety of dishes.

"General Greene—Governor Rutledge—suffer me to persuade you both to the ragout which is before me."

"What is it, captain?"

"Try it, general. It is the alerta—the green alerta—a sort of chicken you will find it, but far superior. The stew is of the *lagarto*, according to the Spaniards, and a dish quite a rare as exquisite on table. Gentlemen, interspersed with these dishes you will find more familiar, but inferior ones. There are hams and tongues, both from the stores of Lord Rawdon, and, in fact, most of this course will be found of foreign character. You will please ask me for no more revelations touching my mode of procuring supplies, as I have no wish to expose the breaking of any more crockery. It is not every one of our partisans who can bear, with so much equanimity as Colonel Horry, the story of his own acquisitions, and how made."

"This—what do you call it?" said Greene.

"Alerta!"

"Is delicious!"

"And nothing could be more savory than this stew, Captain Porgy."

"Yes, indeed, governor—the Spaniards have the merit of the discovery. But gentlemen, with this course, it is time to spiritualize the feast."

The speaker's finger was uplifted; and two enormous bowls of punch were set down at the two ends of the table.

"Gentlemen, we owe a great deal to the providence of Lord Rawdon."

"And the improvidence of Horry," whispered Rutledge, "for, of a verity, had he captured those spoils, he would never have made the same use of them as our host Rawdon."

"Sir," said Porgy with solemnity, "he would have wasted them — naked, upon his dragoons. — Gentlemen, you will please fill for a sentiment. Colonel Singleton see that your end of the table charges duly."

"We are ready, captain."

Porgy rising: —

"Gentlemen, our first regular sentiment: 'The cause of Liberty — the cause of the American continent — the cause of all continents wherever man has a living soul!'"

"Music." And the bands struck up.

"Captain Porgy," said Lee, "send me, if you please, a second supply of that dish which you call the alerta. I don't know what sort of bird it is, but the savor is that of young pigeons. It is wonderfully nice."

"I agree with you, Lee," said Colonel Williams, "though I have no more idea what the bird is than of the mansions of the moon. Let me trouble you also, Captain Porgy."

"I must also trespass, captain," said Carrington. "Ordinarily, I seldom suffer myself to eat of dishes of which I know nothing; but these foreign meats come to us under good guaranties, though half the time without a name at all."

"Unless French, which is so much Greek to me," said Maham. "Captain, that *lagarta* stew is princely."

"No crowned head in Europe enjoys the like. Shall I help you, Colonel Maham?"

"Thank you, yes. But I thought you called it foreign."

"So it is — in one sense; but this is not imported. It is wholly domestic."

"Well, foreign or domestic, it is first rate," said Greene. "I will try a little more of it, Captain Porgy."

"Ah! general," — with a smile — "suffer me to say that it is only in the militia service, after all, that the taste properly refines. Governor, shall I serve you?"

"Thank you, I will mince a little of your *lagarta*, captain," and a sly glance of Rutledge apprized the captain of his suspicions. But the face of Porgy made no revelations.

"Gentlemen," said Singleton, at the other end of the table, "fill your glasses."

"Ready, all," said Porgy.

Singleton rose, and gave:—

"South Carolina—almost freed from the footstep of the foreign tyrant, and rising to the full assertion of her own sovereignty!"

A brilliant burst from John Rutledge, brief, but like a fiery tongue speaking to the soul, followed this sentiment; and the music rose into a triumphant peal as his voice died away upon the echoes. Other sentiments succeeded other speeches; Rutledge, Greene, Marion, Sumter, Lee, were all duly honored with toasts, and all responded, each after his own fashion, all unaffectedly, simply, and with the proper earnestness of soldiers. And the punch flowed anew into fresh goblets, and the merriment grew high, and some of the grave barons began to sing in snatches, and the volunteer toasts filled up the pauses in the conversation. Meanwhile, a score of melons were placed upon the board, and the preserved fruits from the West Indies, guava and ginger, were crowded upon the board, and provoked new merriment at the expense of Rawdon, who lost, and Harry who refused to find the prize.

And while they gashed deeply the purple centres of the melons, Rutledge suddenly said to Porgy:—

"And now, captain, that you have had your triumph, that all present have borne testimony in the least equivocal manner to the merits of your feast, I would fain know of what those foreign dishes were compounded, of which, knowing nothing, all have partaken so freely. Hams and tongues, fresh from Britain, designed for my Lord Rawdon's own table, have been sent away from yours uncut—proof of homage, the most profound, to yet preferable meats. Pray tell us, then, what were the elements of your *lagarto* and your *olla*—your *ragout* and stews."

"Ay, ay," seconded the company, "let us know. What were the birds?"

"I should really be pleased to know, Captain Porgy," said General Greene, bowing, "touching those birds."

"There need be no mystery in it now, general, since, as Governor Rutledge says, the feast has triumphed. But I am afraid I shall too greatly confound you, when I state that the dishes contained no birds at all. The stew of *olla* was com

pounded chiefly of the race which helped Homer in the construction of an epic—a race which Milton describes as the—

"'Small infantry
Warred on by cranes.'"

"You surely do not mean *frogs*, Captain Porgy?" cried Lee, with affected horror in his accents.

"Your guess is a sagacious one, and worthy of the legion, Colonel Lee."

"Good heavens! and is it come to this, that the soldiers of liberty should be reduced to the necessity of frog-eating?"

"Necessity, Colonel Lee!" exclaimed Rutledge. "By heavens, sir, it should be matter of taste and preference, sir, if only in due deference to our great Gallic ally; but, of a truth, sir, after to-day's feast, it should be a new argument in behalf of liberty, that she has brought us to such rare fine feeding and such improved tastes."

"And the other dish, Captain Porgy," demanded Sumter, "the stew with the Spanish name?"

"The name speaks for itself—*lagarta*. It is of the great lizard family—the cayman—in vulgar speech, the alligator. But the specimens employed, gentlemen, were mere juveniles; young vagabonds, whose affectionate parents had hardly suffered them out of sight before. They had probably never fed on larger prey than their neighbors of the alerta family."

"One question, Captain Porgy," said Carrington; "be so good as to inform me, if, among your several unfamiliar dishes, I have had the happiness to eat of the rattlesnake, the viper, the moccasin, or the boa-constrictor?"

"Alas! colonel, I grieve to say that you have not. I should have been pleased to have got a couple of young chicken-snakes, but I was not fortunate in the search. We got glimpse of a few runners [black-snakes], but they were quite too swift of foot for the hunters. The chicken-snake is of unexceptionable tenderness; the runner is a little too muscular, if not previously well sodden; but, unless near a hencoop, or a corncrib, it is not easy to find the chicken-snake. I repeat my regrets that I could not secure this delicacy for my table. But another time, Colonel Carrington, should you sup with me, I will make a special effort in your behalf."

"I thank you, sir; do not suffer your regrets to disturb you. For that matter, I am half doubtful whether your *olerta* and *lagarta*, of which I have, in my ignorance, partaken somewhat too freely, will continue to lie lightly on my soul or stomach."

"Have no fears, sir; and the better to secure their repose, do me the honor, sir, of a bowl of punch with me. Gentlemen, I entreat the whole table to our companionship."

And the vessels were filled and emptied.

"And now, gentlemen," continued the host, I give you—'The poets, who minister at once to Apollo, to Bacchus, and to Mars, and beg to introduce you to the only representative of the faculty in our squadron, Mr. George Dennison, my ensign. If I mistake not, he has been this day as busy with the muse, as I with my cook; and, if we will suffer him, he will bring us gifts from Parnassus not unworthy of those which we have enjoyed from the provision-wagon of Lord Rawdon."

"In which Horry, going from Dan to Beersheba, could see nothing."

"Having a taste for baths, warming-pans, and chamber-furniture."

"'Nough of that—that—Singleton! I—I—I'm a sinner be—be—beyond salvation, if I ever pass a little mean-looking wagon again, without seeing what's in it."

"But—Mr. Dennison," said Rutledge.

"George! Geordie!" said Porgy, good-humoredly. The poet, hitherto the only silent person at table, now rose—a tall, slender person, of bright, lively eye, mouth full of expression, Grecian nose, and great forehead rising up like a tower. His cheeks were flushed, his frame trembled, and there was an evident quivering of the lip which was discernible to every eye about him. Dennison sang the verses, which he wrote, in a clear, military voice, shrill like a clarion. There was, perhaps, no great deal of music in his composition, but enough for the present purpose, and of the kind best suited, perhaps, for a military gathering—bold, free, eager and full of animation. His ballad had been the work of that very afternoon.

He had no prefaces. But, waiting till the music hushed, and the voices, he then began:—

THE BATTLE FEAST.

To the dark and bloody feast,
Haste ye battle vultures, haste;
There is banquet, man and beast,
For your savage taste:
Never on such costly wassail
Did ye flesh your beaks before;
Come, ye slaves of Hesse Cassel,*
To be sold no more!

Small your cost to George of Britain,
One and sixpence sterling down;†
Yet for this, ye sorry chapmen,
Each will lose his crown;
Freedom knows no price for valor,
Yours is measured by the groat,
Britain pays in gold and silver,
We in steel and shot.

Recreants, ye from Scottish Highlands,‡
Lately rebels to the throne
Of that brutal foreign despot,
Now, whose sway ye own;
Ye are welcome to the banquet,
Which is spread for all who come,
Where the eater is the eaten,
And the deathsman goes to doom.

And ye braggart sons of Erin,
Loathing still the sway ye bear,
Groaning in the very fetters,
Ye would make us wear;
Ever writhing, ever raging,
'Neath the bonds ye can not break—
Here the bloody banquet woos ye,
Gather and partake!

* The Hessians, hired at so much per head to the crown of Britain, for the war in America, formed no small portion of the British army.

† We are not sure that Master George Dennison is altogether right in this statement of the hire of the Hessians per head, but the difference is immaterial, whether in poetry or history.

‡ The exiled rebels of '45, when settled in America, almost wholly proved adherents of that monarch whom, as followers of the Stuarts, they opposed to the knife. The disasters of '45 cured them of all propensity to rebellion. Even the Macdonalds, the famous Hector — Flora who saved the Pretender — all became loyal to George the Third in America, and fought against the patriots.

Stoop, ye vultures, to the issue,
It will be ere set of sun!
Mark whose valor bides the longest,
Blood of price or blood of none.
Comes the Tartan of Glenorchy,
Comes the sullen Saxon boor,
Comes the light-heeled German yager,
Crowding to the shore!

Who shall meet them by the water
On the mountain, in the vale,
Meet them with the stroke of slaughter,
Till the right arm fail?
Wherefore ask? Yon pealing summons,
Finds fit answer, sharp and soon,
Answer fit for peers and commons,
Yager and dragoon.

Lo! the soul that makes a nation,
Which, from out the ranks of toil,
Upward springs in day of peril,
Soul to save the soil!
Comes a high and mighty aspect,
From the shores of Powhatan;—
Lo! in him the nation's hero,
Glorious perfect man!*

Follows, rugged as his mountains,
Daring man from Bennington;†
Blacksmith stout from Narraganset,‡
Good where deeds are done:
Comes the keen-eyed Santee rifle,
Sleepless still and swift as flame,
Rowel rashing,§ bullet winging‖
Man of deadly aim.

Stoop, ye vultures, to the issue,
Stoop, and scour the bloody plain;
Flesh your beaks where fat the carnage,
Mountains up the slain:
Whose the skull your talon rendeth:
Eye, within your dripping beak,
Speechless tongue that loosely lolleth
On divided cheek?

In the tartan of Glenorchy,
Scarlet of the Saxon boor,

* Washington. † Stark. ‡ Greene. § Sumter ‖ Marion.

Gray frock of the Hessian yager
Strewn from mount to shore;
Read the fate of hireling valor,
Read the doom of foreign foe,
Know that he who smites for freedom,
Ever strikes the deadly blow!

It was in the midst of the compliments of the party to the poet, that Willie Sinclair stole in to the table, and plucked the sleeve of Marion, who rose quickly and quietly, and went out with him in silence. The company sat at the table some time longer.

"Why your poet seems a genuine Birserker, Captain Porgy. This chant was worthy to be sung in the hall of Odin. Does he fight as bravely as he sings."

"Every bit, sir, and he goes into battle with the same convulsive sort of tremor with which he begins to sing or to recite. But that passes off in a few moments, and then he fairly rages. In fact, sir, it is not easy for him to arrest himself, and he sometimes shows himself rather too savage in strife—with rather too great an appetite for blood."

"You are as fortunate, Captain Porgy, in your poet as your cook; I would I could persuade them from you!—Who?—Do you say?"

These last words were spoken to Lieutenant Frampton, who had whispered something into Rutledge's ear.

"Colonel Sinclair, your excellency. He waits you without, along with General Marion."

"Instantly"—and, watching his opportunity, while beakers were filling, Rutledge stole away. Greene followed his example, so did Sumter and the elder officers; the young ones remained, and soon Captain Porgy, his veneration no longer active, was in full flight, keeping the table in a roar, with merry jest, jibe, and story, till the hours grew something smaller than the stars, and the moon had a hooded, downcast looking visage, as if she had seen or heard something to shock her modesty. Let us leave the revellers while they make a final onslaught upon the punchbowls.

CHAPTER XLVII.

SCENE CLOSES IN CLOUD AND MYSTERY

It is a necessary law of our existence that we are not allowed to have things just as we wish them. Life runs not more smoothly than love. The course of both is broken with frequent impediments, if only in order that the stream should possess a due degree of vitality for its own strength and purification. We are not allowed to feel secure, at any moment, in our possession, or in the full realization of our favorite purposes. Use all precautions, exercise all our vigilance, assert duly all our resources of thought and genius, and still we find ourselves thwarted by impediments which we are rarely able to foresee, and not often able to contend with.

Willie Sinclair had proved himself as circumspect, vigilant and industrious as brave. He had cheerfully gone to his tasks and these were as various as exacting. He had calmly undertaken the most perilous situations, and had encountered their difficulties and dangers with an ability which had resulted, thus far, in the most perfect success, in all those respects which concerned the interests of the army and the country. He had won the admiration even of such admirable judges and performers as Rutledge and Marion. But in his personal fortunes —in respect to those interests which concerned his individual sympathies and affections—everything had gone wrong. He had offended his father by his patriotism—had still further offended him, by suffering his heart to go astray into pastures which were forbidden—and now the added mortification of seeing the object of his affections, and all her family, involved in dangers, including sundry forms of peril, while in his keeping partially, and mostly because of their connection with himself;—in this lay the chief sting of his present suffering.

He had failed utterly in his search after Bertha and her mother. They had left no traces which he could light upon. Such as he had followed, had only deluded him from the right path; and he returned to camp in despair. He had lost every clue to the pursuit. For the moment, he appeared unmanned; and when he had reported the results of his expedition to Marion, it required all the ingenuity of the famous partisan to inspirit him. Not that he was disposed to forego future exertion in the pursuit of his object. That was the one purpose which he had in contemplation; and when he summoned his general out to a conference, it was with the view to obtaining the desired permission to continue his search after the family of Travis, without regard to the action of the army.

Marion fully sympathized with the natural grief and apprehension of our hero. He knew, just as well as anybody else, what should be the apprehensions felt for the safety of Mrs. Travis and her daughter — to say nothing of the father and son. He knew the wild outlawry ranging through the country; the reckless brutality of the refugees on both sides; the cold and savage nature of Inglehardt; the dangers which threatened male and female equally of the scattered family. But he had his consolations. He gave Sinclair a full report of the resolves made in council, and mentioned the fact that, with Greene's permission, Rutledge had reserved himself (Sinclair) with the corps of St. Julien, for special duties, which he had yet kept private.

"I have no question, major, that the governor has done so in order to give you *carte blanche*, with special reference to the Travis family. But here he comes."

Rutledge appeared at the remark, and shook Sinclair's hand with affectionate sympathy.

"Come further this way, general," said he. And they retired to a fallen tree on the edge of a thicket, and there seated themselves. "You have been unsuccessful, Sinclair?"

"Wholly so, governor."

"No clues?"

"None, sir! I followed such only as misled me. I have not the the slightest idea what course now to pursue. I have no traces of the party, and no plans."

"Ideas," said Rutledge, cheerily, "do not obey the will! They come without premeditation. You may not have them to-night, but they will come with the morning. You know not how wonderful is sleep, in giving freedom to conjecture. You are exhausted. You have not slept;—with such a state of your nervous system, to think would be impossible."

And he felt the pulse of the dragoon officer as he spoke, and looked into his eyes.

"Your nervous system is out of order. You have neither slept nor supped. You must do both, or you will be sick. Your tone is enfeebled. You must especially exert your will, if you would be usefully active. Hear me, colonel—and by the way, here is your commission. You will do me the honor to accept this proof of my high appreciation of your recent services."

Sinclair bowed as he took the paper.

"Hear me, Sinclair. You are physically weak, mentally suffering—morally and physically prostrated. If you do not bring up your body, by the exercise of your mind, you will have fever in twenty-four hours. Now, my dear fellow, do you conceive the mischief of that fever? It will incapacitate you for this search after the Travis family! I have set my heart on this search, which can be executed by nobody so well as yourself. That damsel, Bertha Travis, and her excellent mother, succeeded in the brief meeting which I had with them, in twining themselves about my heart. I am resolved that you shall recover them! For this purpose, anticipating—or holding as possible—your present failure, I obtained General Marion's consent to the appropriation, to my own object, of your services and those of Captain St. Julien with his troop. You are to enjoy a roving commission; moving at your own discretion, and only required to co-operate with General Sumter's command when occasion offers. Now, my dear Sinclair, unless you assert your will, for the benefit of your body, this commission will be of no value in your hands. You will be on your back, prostrate with fever, in less than twenty-four hours. Now, it is useless to tell a man that he must feed, or physic, rest, or work, if his mind does not spring in concert with the counsel. I tell you what is before you—what is the trust given to your hands—what is the danger to the objects which you love—and

what is the degree of force that we can accord to you in the prosecution of your duties. We can do no more. Nobody can do more for you. You must do the rest for yourself. Look to the danger—look to the trust. Let your mind rise to the exigency, and you will grow strong; you must *will* it—*will* it—and sleep and eat, under the will which demands that you be strong. These ladies you can rescue—no doubt of it—if you give yourself a little time, and work with heart. Travis you may rescue. I see nothing to alarm you for the safety of either of these parties, if you only feel what you have to do, and resolve to do it with your usual promptness. If not—then God be merciful to this poor family, for they are all in a most serious danger."

"Ah! if it be not too late, sir!" answered Sinclair, in choking accents.

"We are not to suppose this under any circumstances. It is sufficient to *find* it too late. The very fear that it is so, is apt to enfeeble the exertion, which would else provide the remedy. But, in the case of Travis and his son, it can not be too late, we know. We know the game of their captor, supposing him to be Inglehardt. His profit lies in keeping the secret of Travis, and using it against the terrors of his prisoner. It is only when he finds that nothing can be gained, in this way, that he will betray him. Meanwhile, we may be very sure that Inglehardt will keep father and son as secretly as safely. He would lose all hold upon the family were they surrendered as prisoners to the British. He has the two somewhere in private bonds. In respect to Mrs. Travis and her daughter, the rapidity with which they have been carried off is, itself, in some degree, proof of their safety. Brutality and outrage, if designed, would be perpetrated instantly, and their captors would not have burdened themselves with the prisoners. They are clearly kept for ransom; and this proves that they have been taken—if taken at all—by those who are not connected with the regular service; some outlying bands of tories; and we know that there have been several skulking about in this region. There has been some clever trick by which the tracks of the carriage have been concealed. In your impetuosity, you have probably failed to examine the ground with sufficient care. In all probability

there has been some route across the Caw-caw nearer than the one at which you crossed, and over which they have been taken. It is not impossible, indeed, that they have crossed in the track of the British army, and have gone into Orangeburg."

"If Ballou were here! or even Brave!" said Sinclair.

And he mused, and speculated aloud. His mind was once more beginning to work, under the practical coercion of that of Rutledge. The latter knew quite well that the best relief for the despondency of an eager mind, is new responsibility and provocation—and he gave it. The discussion of probabilities succeeded. The general plan of the raid contemplated by the partisans was unfolded, in all its necessary details, for Sinclair's information; and, in its examination, he gradually showed to his hearers that he was beginning to exert that will, the activity of which, Rutledge insisted, was necessary to keep him from prostration by disease. At length Marion said:—

"Sinclair knows all that we need tell him, governor. Let him brood to-night—what there is left of it—over what he knows. He will have some leisure in the morning also, since none of the mounted men will take up the line of march until the infantry is sufficiently advanced. We must keep our ground here, and cover their departure from the enemy. If Rawdon marches out from Orangeburg, even with all the force of Cruger added to his own, we can head them at pleasure. Our friend, here, will have need to think for the next twelve hours, as to his own plan of operations. In that time he may hear from his scouts. At all events, whether he hears or not, his policy is now to be deliberate. He must re-examine the ground where the carriage was concealed; and to do this thoroughly, let him take any scout he pleases from my command. Ballou, if he comes in in season, is worth the whole of them; but if not, there are many who ought to be able to take and keep the track of a four-wheeled carriage drawn by four horses. Let us leave the rest to him."

The army moved off by dawn, leaving the mounted men and cavalry to cover the ground and conceal the fact of their departure. They did not move a moment too soon. They were no longer in a condition to be useful. Two-thirds of the contin-

regulars were sick; the Virginia militia all sick, and in such a temper of despondency, that it was apprehended they would all abandon the camp that night, and disappear homeward, a large number having already deserted. The army (foot) had become an absolutely disorderly crew—demoralized by starvation, want of clothes, and the exhaustion of forced marches. The militia were generally discontent; alleging, in justification, the partiality shown to the continentals; and, especially, the petting of particular commands at the expense of the whole army. But leaving them to their progress, which brought them finally in safety to their salubrious camp upon the Santee hills, we shall linger a few moments in that of the partisans—the mounted men, who, after covering the retreat of the infantry, were destined for active service on so many points below.

At two o'clock, on the morning of the 13th July, the army was in motion. At dawn, the general followed with his escort. So well did the mounted men cover the ground, and cut off all communications with Orangeburg, that Greene, with his foot, was beyond the Congaree before Rawdon suspected his departure.

Then were the mounted men let loose upon that memorable incursion into the Low Country, which drove the scattered parties of the enemy into the walls of Charleston, and prostrated the royal power to the very gates of that city. On the 14th July the detachments of Sumter were sweeping all the avenues that led below, while he, with the main body, was pursuing the road along the southside of the Congaree, leading to the east of Cooper river. At the same time, Willie Sinclair, with the troop of St. Julien, was once more traversing, with measured steps, and keen scrutiny, the track pursued by the carriage of Mrs. Travis, to the moment when it turned aside for temporary refuge in the thicket. Our *dramatis personæ* are thus "all at sea."

Here, a curtain falls, for the present, over the several parties. There is a necessary interval in which all is obscurity. A cloud envelopes the fortunes of Travis and his son; a mystery wraps the fate of his wife and daughter. But the pursuer is everywhere upon their heels, and a genius, courage, fortitude, and

zeal, which are sure to recover the fugitives, if this be possible to human enterprise and endeavor! Meanwhile, the two great rivals, the generals of Britain and America, are making their preparations for the final trial of strength between them. In their posts of watch and rest, they are recruiting their forces and bracing their sinews for the last wrestle for possession of the state. Meanwhile, the partisans are in motion, prompt in enterprise, and eager for performance. The details of their several progresses must be reserved for another volume, when we shall seek, in the tale of the bloody field of "Eutaw" to

"Ravel out
These weaved-up *mysteries.*"

Till then, we pray the patience of such readers as are curious to learn the fate of those who have been the principal objects of our regard in the preceding chapters.

THE END

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